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SINGLE EYE,

THE SCOURGE.

A STORY OF KING PHILIP'S WAR

BY WARREN ST. JOHN.

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SINGLE EYE.

CHAPTER I.

SINGLE EYE AND HIS RED FRIEND.

THE name of Massachusetts owes its origin to the Indian ~~sachem~~ Massasoit, who dwelt in the neighborhood where Boston now is. He had two sons, named by the English, Alexander and Philip. Massasoit, during the entire period of his life, was the firm friend of the white. At the time of his death, which occurred in the year 1661 the entire white population of New England did not, in all probability exceed forty thousand souls; the Indians were less by some ten thousand, and were rapidly decreasing, while their white neighbors were growing stronger year by year.

A feeling of jealousy was not long taking root in the breast of the savages, and certainly with good cause, for, day by day, their lands were slowly but surely being occupied by the whites. It is true, these encroachments were always made by "purchase," and the prices agreed upon were duly paid. Still, the Indian frequently repented of these large sales. On these grounds they had lived and sported in happy childhood; the moldering bones of their ancestors were being profaned by the tread of the stranger; and, if tempted by the goods of the whites to traffic away their soil, they soon repented of their transfer. After the death of his father, Alexander, the elder son, inherited his authority. A reign of a few months, however, was suddenly ended by his death, and Philip succeeded him, in 1662. His Indian name was Metacom. The ambitious, haughty spirit he manifested, soon gave him the nickname of "King Philip." The undisturbed tranquillity which the English had so long enjoyed, soon was brought to a close by the hostile feeling he exhibited at an early period. We must give him the credit of possessing all the cunning of his nation, superadded to the thought and foresight of the white man. He carefully refrained from open attack till the English, by some act, should give him the chance to retaliate, and to command the aid and sympathy of surrounding tribes.

It was a hot, sultry day, toward the latter part of summer. No cloud, not even the thinnest gauze of vapor, could be seen; and the leaf, as it lay with upturned point, seemed as if offering a prayer to heaven for water. An unbroken forest extended, far as the eye could reach, to the north and west, relieved in its outline, here and

there, by the rugged top of some mountain, raising itself in majesty to the sky. To the south and east stretched, in mirrored brightness, the waters of Massachusetts Bay. No wind stirred its calm surface even into ripples; the silence was unbroken, save by the buzzing and chirrup of insect life. On the fallen trunk of a tree sat, or rather reclined, a man whom the connoisseur in countenances might well pronounce a masterpiece of ugliness. His hair, hanging in unshorn locks over his wholly invisible forehead, was of the texture of fine wire. His features were singularly contradictory, for his strong Roman nose surmounted a woman's chin, distinctly defined in its roundness and its one dimple of grace; his single eye was as mild as a maiden's in its tender light, yet the brows which overarched were heavy and fierce, and, meeting in the center, seemed to offer a point of aim for an enemy's ball. At a casual glance he was a monster—on closer acquaintance he was a warm-hearted, cheerful man, capable of such sacrifices and services as have made many a less worthy person great. His dress was that usually worn by the trappers of the American forests, consisting of breeches and leggings of Indian-tanned deerskin, with a frock of blue homespun, provided with ample pockets of deer-skin, and fringed with coarse cotton, home-died with madder.

Peter Simpson was a true son of the forest. He had inhabited the wilds from childhood. Indeed, the superstitious settlers believed him the progeny of the wood—to have *grown* there, as if indigenous. The forest was his home—his wife—his children. He loved it as such, and only took pleasure in a society which sympathized fully in his pursuits and tastes.

This is our hero.

“Wal, I’m blessed if I’m going to stop much longer here, for I’m a-losing flesh sitting in this ar sun. Hot?” he added, asking the question and answering it himself: “Hot? I reckon myself a judge o’ fire-arms, and therefore I say it’s all-fired hot. But what on ’arth has become of that red-skin? It’s past noon, and I was to meet him here ’bout that time. Phew! I am a-roasting, sartin. I’ll soon begin to *sizzle*!”

The Indian expected belonged to the Mohigan tribe. Between him and Simpson a firm friendship existed. Before parting, a few weeks before, they had arranged to meet at the spot where the hunter now was. The usual promptness with which these appointments were kept made it a matter of no little anxiety to the one who, arriving at the time specified, did not find his friend there. The threatening attitude which the Indians had lately assumed, under the control of Philip, caused Pete to feel no little concern as to his friend's whereabouts. We must bear in mind that the Mohigan tribe had joined the English in their attacks on their common enemy. For this reason, Simpson entertained fears as to his companion's safety.

As hour after hour passed, without bringing any signs of him, Pete's impatience manifested itself by his uneasiness. Now he

would rise and walk up and down with hasty strides, then rescat himself a moment, only to resume his walk again, while he ejaculated, in a testy manner :

"Kinder think they've got that Mohigan, blast 'em ! If they have, they'll hear from me and my friend Nancy." He patted "Nancy," his rifle, as he spoke. "But the worst on it is how I'm going to find his trail, kase I don't know war he's been. Howsom ever, I ain't going to camp *here* for the night, and so, Mr. Indian, if you don't come along soon I'll—"

The remainder of the sentence remained unspoken, as some slight noise, significant to his accustomed ear, caused him to spring behind the shelter of a friendly tree. So accustomed had he been to danger, that to place himself in a secure position was his first step; then to carefully inspect with his one keen eye the surrounding woods, and bring his weapon in a position for immediate use.

His precaution in this case proved useless. His ear caught the wild sound uttered by the blue-jay when suddenly started from her leafy covert. So natural was the outcry, that even the experienced woodman would have supposed the bird there; but to Pete it was only the signal. Fearlessly stepping from behind his shelter, and placing his hand to his mouth, he uttered equally as good an imitation of the hungry cry of the hawk.

"Wal, red-skin," he uttered, as an athletic Indian made his appearance, "you're late; what's the matter?"

The Indian—who was named Assawomset, which Pete had abbreviated to Assa—had seated himself on the fallen tree mentioned. He was a noble specimen of his race. His tall, well-proportioned figure, his expressive face, and the wild native grace of action, made Simpson's ugliness only the more noticeable.

Extending his hand, which his white friend grasped, he uttered the single word :

"Bad."

"Wal, I kind of thought so, Assa. But iet's know more 'bout it?" asked Pete.

"Philip bad," answered the Indian, in his imperfect use of the English tongue. "Pokanokets, Wampanoags, Narragansetts—all bad; dig hatchet up—bury pipe—all war—all blood—want white man's scalp—come take it bum-by."

Pete uttered a long, low sound, expressive of surprise. He well knew of the bad feeling existing, but was not aware that it had extended to the powerful tribes named.

"Took to the war-path, have they? I guess it'll be the worse for themselves, in the long run. Did ye see any signs of the varmints, Assa?"

"Big many," replied the Indian, pointing toward the north-west. "Come this way soon!" Rising, as he said this, and turning his back toward his friend, he exhibited a slight arrow wound under the right shoulder. "Near catch Assa." He scowled as he spoke.

“Wal, they did, that’s sure. But let’s get down to the settlements and have the boys ready. I kinder think, red-skin, you and I’s going to have something to do in these parts soon, and you’re up for a fought, ain’t you?”

The Indian did not speak, but pointed to the wound in his back, while the expression of hatred that passed over his countenance gave the hunter his answer.

Both made preparations for their long tramp. Securing their weapons, so as to give them the free use of their arms, they started, leaving as faint a trail as possible.

Before proceeding further, let us recur to an event which happened to the Mohigan a few years previous. At a period when the bloodthirsty Indians of New England had, for the accomplishment of some secret purpose—but which was never fully developed—established an outward show of friendship, Assa had mingled freely with his Indian brothers, and had married a daughter of the Narraganset tribe. The propensity of the Indian for war, ere long, broke the mere semblance of friendship which they had put on, and the war-dance was given in many a village. The Mohigan had removed with his wife, as soon as the hatchet was dug up, near to the home of his white friends, and, for a time, was unmolested. While on a hunting excursion with Single Eye, a small party of his wife’s tribe reached his wigwam, and, after destroying it, together with all his personal effects, and slaying his young brother, succeeded in reaching their main body with his wife in safety. The almost frantic husband swore to be avenged—not one of that party should remain unscalped! The sequel will show how well the oath was kept.

CHAPTER II.

THE ALARM.

THAT the Indians were on the war-path was known, ere long, to the most secluded settler. The mother would carefully place her infant in its little bed for the night, conscious that, ere morning dawned, she and it might be in another world. “Signs” were discovered by scouts, and the settlers’ superstitious fears were aroused by portentous omens, to add to their anxieties and terrors.

History gravely remarks, that “in a clear, still, sunshiny morning, there were divers persons in Malden who heard in the air, on the south-east of them, a great gun go off, and presently, thereupon, the report of small guns, like musket-shot, very thick, discharging as if there had been a battle. This was at a time when there was nothing

visible done in any part of the colony to occasion such noises, and, on the same day in Plymouth colony, in several places, invisible troops of horses were heard riding to and fro, and in other places, the perfect form of an Indian's bow appeared in the sky; strange to say, thousands of noises were heard even to the strange howling of wolves at night."

Such were the witch fancies which at that season of alarm filled the minds of the colonists with terror.

The sturdy picneers never went unarmed to their work, while the rumors of danger would bring many a daring spirit together, ready for a stand against their common foe.

On the gentle slope of a hill was the residence of William Hendrick. The many well-tilled fields spoke of the industry and early settlement of the owner. His house was composed of logs, but, even with its rough exterior, it spoke of happiness and comfort within. The family consisted of himself, three sons and a daughter—their mother having died years before. The dwelling was remote from the village some two miles. One day during the time under notice, a young man was seen hurriedly approaching by the road leading to the settlement.

"Good morning, Robert. You seem in no little hurry; perhaps you bring tidings of importance?" said Mr. Hendrick, greeting the young man warmly on his arrival.

"Indeed, I do, sir; but," he added, "what I wish to say I should like no ear at present to hear save yours."

"Step this way, then," replied Mr. Hendrick, turning the corner of the house, on the side which was pierced by no windows. "We can now converse without fear of interruption."

"My fears, sir, may be exaggerated; still, I feel it to be a duty I owe not only you, but to all I can communicate with, to warn them of the now threatening preparations the Indians are making under their bloodthirsty king. We, down at the settlements, have been expecting Pete Simpson with his Mohigan friend for the last week, feeling satisfied the information they will communicate can be relied on, but no tidings of them have reached us. Have you heard of the death of John Sassamon?" he asked.

"I have not," replied Mr. Hendrick.

"Why, you surprise me, sir! I thought all knew it."

"How long since it occurred?"

"I cannot exactly fix the date; but it is said the tragedy is to be attributed to Philip's generally hostile intentions."

"Well, be that as it may, that chief knows well what he is about. Tell me the circumstances connected with the death of this man of whom you speak."

"Sassamon," answered Robert, "was an Indian—a former subject of Philip's—but having lived long with us, he mastered our tongue, and became a convert to Christianity. Some time ago he was sent as a missionary to the Namaskets, and, while living there,

became possessed, by some means, of Philip's plot against us. Of this conspiracy he immediately informed our Governor at Plymouth. The Indians suspected him, and his lifeless body has been found in Assawomset pond. Three Indians have been arrested, tried and executed—one of them confessing their united guilt. The corpse, it is said, bled at the approach of the murderers. Philip sees how useless it is to attempt further secrecy, and, as I left the village, it was rumored that he was at the head of a large force, marching this way. I think it best to remove with your family to the cave, so that as much time can be had as possible in obliterating the trail you will be obliged to make. In the village there will be no safety at all, in comparison to that which the cave will offer. The only place of refuge there is the dilapidated block house."

"I am most certainly thankful to you, and your warning shall not remain unheeded. But walk in, Robert; Lucy," he added, with a knowing smile, "will be glad to welcome you, if not the news you bring."

A blush mounted to the young man's cheek as he followed in silence into the house.

Lucy Hendrick was not beautiful. Her face was only redeemed from absolute plainness by the expressive eye, the fair and open brow, and the mass of luxuriant hair which she wore plainly across her forehead. In stature, she exceeded the average height of woman, and her perfectly rounded figure seemed to have borrowed its grace of motion from the wild deer, which bounded past her in her rambles through the forest. She was a frank, fearless girl, and, as Robert entered did not try to hide the pleasure she felt at seeing him, but extending her hand, greeted him warmly, exclaiming:

"What brings you at this hour, Robert? Something unusual, I know, for your manner is serious. What is it?"

"Nothing, Lucy, nothing of fact. I happened up this way and simply called," he answered.

"Robert," she said, showing by the intonation of her voice that she did not believe him, "will you not confide all to me?"

He was about to reply, when the door was unceremoniously thrown open, and Single Eye entered the room. Removing his cap, he seated himself, as if quite at home. Then, after running his eye over the group and entire room, he said:

"Good-day to you all, and how are you? Looking hearty, as I guess you are; but, I've something to tell you—and you, gal, don't you go to hollering when you hear it: the sooner you're on the move, and out of this house, the better it will be for your scalps' sake."

The blunt, unhesitating manner of this warning carried conviction with it, and threw the entire family into consternation. Hendrick and his sons sprung for their guns, while Robert made search for something he could turn into a weapon of defense.

This prompt action seemed highly to please the hunter.

"Well, I like *that*. It shows your pluck. But you've time to

talk over matters and pack up, for I'm going to have a *regular* move, in spite of the rails. You," turning to Robert, "make a run for the village. Keep the road, for there's no heathens about yet. Tell the folks you've see'd me, and I say for them to wake up. Come back quick, and fetch all the powder and balls you can, kase I'm going to stand siege, and keep the gal from getting coted, or you can set me down, and my friend out there," pointing toward the door, "as green gourls. You see I'm mighty 'posed to these a' trails, kase it takes too much headwork."

Robert immediately started, not stopping to argue whether the advice was best, for no one who knew Pete doubted his ability to meet an emergency like the present. After his departure, all the provisions in the house were inspected, and a selection made of those that required the least cooking. A small supply of blankets was tied up, with Lucy's entire wardrobe, and from an assortment a light, strong rope was chosen.

The cave Robert mentioned was in the face of a limestone ledge skirting a valley through which flowed a small stream for several miles in a southerly direction. From the house, the distance to it (the stream) was perhaps a hundred yards. From the barn ran an ordinary worm fence, its last panel extending to the water. The house-path running up to this fence was beaten hard by continuous use. These things Pete and Assa had noticed before the hunter entered the house, and their plan of action was already laid. His opposition to trails referred to this track—it would leave no trail.

"Now, boys," said Pete, after all was ready for the start, "fasten them guns of your'n about ye, kase what you're going to do wants the use of both hands, and come out doors with me. Miss Lucy go to work, and put all them ar things we've hauled about in their places, make the house look as if you folks had gone visiting; and you, squire, fetch the things we've tied up close to the door. Mind, don't set any of them where they'll leave a mark behind. Come along now, and let's get things to the cave as quick as lightning."

They followed him out of the house, and, in doing so, met the Indian, who had seated himself on the door-step. Assa rose at seeing them, and, as a salutation, nodded his head.

"Now, boys, off with your boots and stockings, and get into that track as quick as you can; I'm in the biggest kind of a hurry to get away from this place. Stop," he exclaimed, as they were about to run in a direct line for the water, "stop and get on this fence—that's the way I want you to get into the water. You can put on your boots when you get to the last panel. Mind, don't knock the bars off the rails."

Assa had, meanwhile, taken the precaution of removing his moccasins, lest even their comparatively soft bottoms should leave some impressions. Pete hastened to follow his example.

"Now, squire, bring along the duls," he said, "and we'll give the boys a back-load."

The object of Pete was to leave in such a manner as to afford the Indians as little clue of how or where they went as possible. In fact it was the intention, judging from the order given Lucy to leave the house as if it was vacated not from fear, but for the purpose of making a neighborly visit. The stream, the fence, the hardened path, provided the very best means for the accomplishment of Single Eye's purpose. As Mr. Hendrick conveyed the things to the hunter, he, in turn, gave them to those waiting in the stream, passing to and fro on the fence. At last all was in readiness, and they started on their way.

We will now leave, for the present, the party, and follow Robert. He was not long in reaching the village. The excitement his tidings produced was intense. Already the villagers' imaginations pictured the Indians in their very midst; wives, mothers and daughters, with beseeching tones, called on their protectors to save them. Had the Savages arrived during the day, the work of death would have been accomplished with little resistance. Robert Wilet strove to re-inspire the men, and with partial success. On the outskirts of the place was an old block-house that had been built for an emergency like the present, but never had been used. It remained in a good state of preservation, and, with a little repair, could be made strong.

It was constructed somewhat differently from those generally built at that day. Instead of square, it was more in the shape of a star, its four corners projecting some six feet further out than the main building, and having holes pierced in its sides for the use of the rifle. These bastion corners prevented the foe that might attack it from sheltering themselves beneath its walls. The roof was very nearly flat, with merely "pitch" enough to carry off the water. A low breastwork, of three feet high, was raised along its rim, to allow its defenders a protection in guarding against an attack from the top.

Wilet, knowing that his friends were in the hands of a man who was better able to provide for them than he could have done, was loth to leave the village, where he was looked upon as a director in providing means to meet the coming danger. He alone, of all, was collected. The tones in which he issued his orders favorably impressed and encouraged all.

As the sun began to set, the entire population of that little village had gathered within the shelter of their now only remaining hope. Provisions enough were stored to last a full month. Within the block-house was a fine spring of water. Ammunition they possessed in abundance. Robert, leaving the command in the hands of one who, he knew, would thus as well as act, left them for the time, taking with him their earnest prayers for his safety. He promised to return in the morning.

By the time he had reached Mr. Hendrick's house it was getting dark. On going to the door, what was his surprise to find it locked; but, after a moment's thought, he understood it all perfectly; from the admonition he had received from Single Eye, to listen his re-

turn, he rightly inferred that that worthy had left without him; but where to look for them was the question. He was not aware that the situation of the cave was known to the hunter; but as inactivity would only make matters worse, and having some knowledge of trailing, he immediately set to work to find how they had left, and what direction they had taken.

The gathering gloom which had spread itself over the hilltop, and settled darkly in the valleys below, soon convinced the young man how useless it was to endeavor finding any traces of them that night; or, if found, how impossible to follow it. His next thought was where to bestow himself for the night. The barn affording the requisite shelter, he was about repairing thither, when the distant crack of a rifle borne on the evening air, sent the blood with a tingling sensation through his veins. There was nothing of cowardice in Robert's nature; he dare meet face to face any man in a contest of life or death provided the cause were just; but, his situation at the present moment, alone, with no aid to expect and very little hope of success, should a body of Indians chance to fall in with him, caused a feeling of apprehension. Love of life beat strongly within his breast, and thought, with her silent but ever impassioned tongue, spoke of Lucy.

To act, and act quickly, was his only hope. His chances to reach the block-house were yet good. He was on the point of starting, when again, with startling nearness, came that sound speaking of death.

"My God!" he exclaimed aloud, "has the work of blood really begun? And here I am," he added with bitterness, "when I should be with those, with *her*! oh, that I but knew of their safety."

"Guess you needn't fret 'bout *that*, young man!" exclaimed a voice at his elbow.

Robert started and quickly raised his rifle, but the speaker continued:

"Hold a bit, youngster! Don't be a fool. It's my way of thinking you'll have chance enough, before we get out of this scrape with them reds."

Wilket recognized the speaker, the dim outline of whose figure could be traced in the darkness. "Is that you, Single Eye?"

"Nobody else; but, if I'd let you had *your* way, you'd soon have made a spirit of me."

"I am most glad to meet you. Where have you taken the family?—what is the course of action to be adopted—what can we do for the village? Our condition is a precarious one."

"Now hold—hold on, before you ask questions by half. You and I've got to make up together for a while, but if you begin to talk them big words to me, how on earth am I going to know what you mean? What kind of a piece did you say we'd got into?"

"A precarious condition—one full of doubt and danger."

"Yes, guess so; only next time use the smallest words—they all ~~has~~ the biggest meaning. Guess you heard that firing, eh?"

"I did. Do you know any thing about it?"

"Ain't sure as I do, but Assa does; he'll be along in a few minutes. Guess I'd better give him a sign."

The next moment the hoarse croak of the frog was heard, as if at some distance. Nature, when she deprives an individual of one faculty, very generally fills the breach by the strengthening of another. So it was in the case of Single Eye. The deformity of his features was made up not only in the clear, well-ordered brain, but in an extraordinary ventriloquial power—a gift which had, when all else failed, rescued him in many dangers.

A few moments elapsed, when a like sound was uttered from the woods immediately back of the house. After a few moments of profound silence, a light footfall was heard, and Assa joined them.

The Indian seemed to have exerted himself to the utmost, for his breath came hot and quick, and his form trembled as is the case when the muscular system has been taxed to its extreme. The exclamation Single Eye now uttered was prompted by the Indian's loading his gun as soon as he had halted.

"Wal you were hard run, sure, if you didn't even have time to load. I reckoned I knew the crack of your rifle from a thousand, though I didn't want to tell the young man so."

He stopped as if some sound had met his ear, but hearing nothing after listening a moment, turned to the Indian and inquired as to the number of their enemy he had seen.

The Mohican did not speak, but motioned toward a couple of scalps that hung still bleeding at his belt, at the same time pointing off in a direct line toward the north-west.

These signs, which were unintelligible to Robert, seemed to arouse the hunter to instant action. He gave a twitch to his belt as if to bring his knife round for use; then, throwing his rifle into the hollow of his left arm, he started at a brisk pace, jerking his head forward as a command for all to follow.

CHAPTER III.

THE RACE FOR LIFE.

Our friends, the Hendricks, arrived at the cave, and in its secret recesses were now safe. No clue, not even the slightest mark, had been left, by which their savage foe could trace them.

The bed of the stream had been followed till they arrived immedi-

ately under the opening, when Assa had carefully ascended to it by means of an old tree, whose branches extended over the water. The rope had been let down and the provisions first hauled up, the precaution being even taken of fastening a guy rope to the main cord, to prevent disturbing the smallest particle of rock in their ascent. When all the provisions and bundles were safely landed, and removed from sight, Pete, first making a loop in which Lucy could securely sit, ascended to the ledge on which the Indian was and assisted in drawing her up. Her father followed next, and lastly her brothers, when the rope was then pulled up, and the minute fibers that it left adhering to the rock were removed by the Indian. As soon as all was completed, a plan of operations was adopted. They were to remain secreted where they now were—not even the boys were to attempt the descent. Water had been provided for their immediate use, and more would be furnished when needed from the stream below.

It was Pete's intention not to leave the cave again that night, but, upon the urgent request of Lucy to bring in Robert he finally consented to do so.

"What makes you feel so anxious 'bout *that* young man?" he quizzingly asked.

"Because he is my friend."

"Wal, it's an uncommon liking for only a friend; but I'll go, and say no more about it."

At the foot of the cliff, Pete said to the Mohigan who had followed him:

"Now, Assa, let's you and me fetch that young fellow as soon as we can find him, for I'm kinder thinking a little sleep wouldn't hurt either of us."

"Me no go; want to find how far Philip come."

"You do, eh? Wal, get along and meet me at the house some time early in the night, if you can. If you ain't along by morning, I'll be after you."

The object the Mohigan had in going back was revenge. The arrow wound in his back still smarted, but nothing in comparison to that in his heart for retaliation. After parting with the hunter, he kept the bed of the stream, to where the fallen tree lay stretched with its branches touching the water. Here he left it, carefully stepping along its trunk, and then selecting the stony and uncovered pebbly soil till he had passed over a considerable distance, when, striking boldly out, not caring to hide his track, he continued on with hurried steps till he crossed the trail which he and Single Eye had made on their arrival that morning. This he immediately took, breaking into the "dog trot," as it is called, and for which the Indian runner is so celebrated. He had rightly judged that his enemies would follow the footprints of himself and white friend, knowing that their first move would be to inform the settlement of the war par-

ties' approach; for this reason, then, he would be more likely to meet with their scouts by taking the *back track*.

For the space of two hours or more, this steady pace was kept up. He had just raised the brow of a hill, and commenced his descent, when immediately below him, and rapidly ascending, were discovered five Indians. Quick as thought he turned on his track, and bounded off with the fleetness of a deer.

He had not proceeded far, when, by the yell which reached him, he was made aware that his enemies had arrived at the spot where he had "doubled." The yell was the signal for pursuit. His plan of escape was quickly determined; he resolved to throw his life into the scale of chance. Slackening his pace at a point where he could see a considerable distance behind, despite the darkness, he waited the appearance of his foes. This he had not long to do. As he supposed would be the case, the fleetest runner was some way in advance, his head bent forward, his nostrils dilated like the hounds on the fresh scent of the deer, and his rifle ready for instant use. Assa, as if to save him the trouble to note the trail, uttered a low, triumphant shout. The pursuing Indian stopped; raising his eye he gave vent to a shout of defiance, and started, with his utmost swiftness, after his supposed victim. They continued running, preserving nearly the same distance between them. The Mohican, steadily drawing his enemy further and farther from his friends, suddenly fell to the ground as if tripped. He lay a moment, then, again springing to his feet, ran as if hurt. This called forth a shout from his pursuer, who stopped and raised his rifle, but the wary Mohican was a moment too quick; bringing his piece suddenly to an aim he fired, and his foe fell. To bound back and secure his scalp was the work of a moment, and then at his utmost speed he continued on.

As the next foremost friend of the fallen man came to where the body lay, he stopped for an instant to gaze upon him; then, with a yell of vengeance, he rushed with a velocity after Assa that caused the ground to pass beneath his feet with almost lightning quickness, hesitating not to think but the same fate might befall him. The only motive prompting him on was the wish to accomplish the Mohican's death—for he knew only too well who was his foe.

Assa had, meanwhile, reloaded his rifle while running; and, as he again looked back, a smile of triumph lit up his features, as he saw his pursuer, regardless of the support of his companions, following on. The remaining three, as they arrived at the spot where the body lay, gathered round it and gave utterance to a mournful wail; then, leaving one of their number to watch it, the two, with renewed vigor, started on in the pursuit.

The short time they delayed gave the Mohican the advantage he sought. Relaxing his speed with the motions of weariness, he dropped his tomahawk and glided behind a tree, letting his rifle also fall to the ground as if useless. His pursuer doubted not of an easy conquest. He had observed the glittering tomahawk lying out in

the moonlight, and, thinking his enemy only armed with his knife, came fearlessly on. This he was allowed to do until within sure distance, when the pretended useless gun was regained, raised, and the next moment a ball went crushing through the pursuer's brain. The Mohigan soon transfixed his scalp to the companionship of the one already at his belt. Seeing he had not time to recover his own tomahawk, Assa tore from the hand that of the dead warrior, and once more continued his head-long flight, giving vent to his hitherto repressed feelings, by the remarkably significant war-whoop of his nation.

The night had now gathered so deeply round the pursuers and the pursued as to convince the former that no further attempts to overtake him could be made with safety. They consequently gave up the chase as they arrived at the body of their second companion.

Assa kept on, not relaxing his speed till the signal that Single Eye made reached his ear. He then stopped, and bending his ear to the ground listened; but hearing nothing, he rightly judged his foe had given over the chase.

The Indians that were approaching to attempt the destruction of that flourishing little settlement, were a small detachment of Philip's main body, he having proceeded toward Swankey, a much larger town, and whose inhabitants were not aware of his stealthy movements, so fraught with peril to them.

Single Eye, after parting with the Mohigan, had, with equal precaution, left no trace of his track from the cave, and had proceeded toward the town. A curiosity to know how Robert would act induced him to secretly watch the proceedings for defense ordered by him. The hunter was a man who formed his likes or dislikes at first sight. Toward young Willet he had been favorably impressed, and sought by the act of following him and secretly watching his movements there, to confirm the good opinion he had formed. He had his reasons for this watchfulness. Robert, he knew, must become one of his most trusted companions.

After the young man had left the block-house, Single Eye followed him; nor would he have made himself known, had not the report of the rifle convinced him that it was time he should assume the direction of movements for their own united safety.

"Well, Assa, how many of them critters is there?" asked Pete, as he strode rapidly on.

The Indian raised his hand, and holding it close to the face of the hunter opened it, then shutting his little finger and thumb, left the remaining three still erect, and with his other hand, pointed to the scalps in his belt.

"Ugh—you only see'd five, and wipe'd out two! But there's a big lot on 'em, if they could send five runners on our trail," replied Pete to the silent answer of the Mohigan. "Now, look a-here you." He said, addressing Robert, "keep right after me, and don't strike out for yourself, if you ever expect to see that pretty gal in the cave

again. You've pluck, I know, and are willing to fight; and you, or some of us, is going to have a chance to do a little of that to-night, or my name ain't Pete Simpson. Assa, can t you afford to give us a little music, like them varmints make, when they want to find out where one another are, in a dark night like the present? "

The Mohigan seemed to understand well enough what Pete said, for he uttered, at once, a wild, shrill cry, that, from the peculiar key in which it was pitched, seemed to penetrate through the forest for miles, while its reverberating echo answered from the distant woody hills. Its notes were still undulating through the dewy air, when a like sound met their ear, coming directly in their front; again it was uttered from the rocky cliff on their right, and far up on the mountain-side in their rear. Both men stopped as if they had suddenly seen an ambushed foe. Pete, motioning Robert to do likewise, stood in breathless silence, listening. If these sounds were startling to an old hunter like Simpson, and to his Mohigan companion, what must have been the effect produced on the young man? The truth conveyed in those mournful yet savage sounds made all feel that their ingenuity would be taxed to the utmost, in extricating themselves from their present difficulty. On three sides were they surrounded, and their only mode of escape lay in their woodland tact. After a moment's pause, Pete said, in a low whisper:

"Mohigan, there's more stirring than I thought of, and we've got to look sharp. Where's that sink-hole we stumbled on about a month ago? "

The Indian at once understood Pete's plan of action. He carefully, and at a glance, ran his eye over the outline of the hills, and then answered:

"Me know; far—half mile that way; come! " and starting forward, the two followed after.

The course he struck out lay in an entirely opposite direction from that which Pete was pursuing, and directly in a line with the lime-stone cliff, in which the cave was situated, though the cave was much further to the south.

This "sink-hole" referred to, was one of those natural hollows, in shape resembling a bowl, that are found in lime-stone regions, supposed to have been formed by the breaking in of the roof of subterranean chambers. The one they were now hurrying to was about one hundred and fifty feet in circumference, and some sixty or more deep at its lowest point. Its bank was thickly studded by a heavy growth of timber, their trunks interlaced by low shrubbery, effectually concealing it from sight. Pete knew that if they could reach it and hide in its concealments, they, for the time, would be safe. With hasty strides the three men proceeded on, the Indian some distance in advance, Pete next, and Robert last.

They had gone over half the distance, when the Mohigan suddenly stopped, and throwing himself flat on the ground listened. Having satisfied himself he turned hurriedly back to where Single Eye

had likewise halted on seeing his movement, and in his own language—using it for the first time since we have known him, and which his friend perfectly understood :

“ Sing e Eye, they are coming—many warriors coming this way ! ”

“ Dro. them, they are, are they ? Well, here’s Nancy, what’ll make one of them yell his death ditty ”—he handled his gun affectionately—“ but I’ll try dolging first afore fight and it’s too dark for them to pick up our trail till morning.”

He carefully turned from the more open woods and plunged into a thicket of undergrowth, followed by his companions. Here he waited in silence the passage of the Wampunogs. A few moments elapsed, when the soft moccasin tramp of a considerable body of that tribe slowly filed past them. The hunter counted them, and, as the last one had disappeared, he whispered in Robert’s ear :

“ Thar’s jest twenty-four of them imps, and wouldn’t they give something to only know we’re here ? My ha’r gin to rise as that last dol rotted serpent went by ; guess he’s somebody ’mong them, kase he was out of line.”

As the receding footsteps of their foe died away, the hunter was about leaving his shelter, when the sharp snap of a dry twig caused him to quickly draw back, and the form of a single warrior appeared on the scene. Coming opposite to where they lay hid, he halted, and glancing around, uttered a short, quick whoop, which was immediately answered by a similar one from those that had gone before ; their returning tramp soon met our friend’s ears.

“ Wal, that’s kind, I’ll swow,” whispered Pete.

“ What ? ” asked Robert, in the same cautious tone.

“ Blast it, boy, do you hear them coming back ? ”

“ Do you know what it means ? ”

“ No ; but they’ll let us know afore long.”

“ They seem to be gathering in council.”

“ It’s my ’pinion they’re going to camp.”

“ Then the light of their fire will show them where we are hid.”

“ Sartin boy, sartin ! but I ain’t going to give them that chance.”

“ What plan can you suggest to avoid it ? ”

“ Wal, just you wait and then you’ll find out. You’re a *lectle* green, if you have got an educated chapper in your head gear.”

“ For God’s sake,” replied Robert, in an excited tone, “ let us leave before they find us out.”

“ And get the hull of our heads skinned ! No sir-ee ; I wants my boochial har ! You hold a bit, and let me try my powers,” answered the hunter with a sprinkling of contempt in his voice.

The Indian laid in the meanwhile, gathered a quantity of wood, and one of their number was, with his tom-chawk, cutting shavings from a dry stick. He next removed from his girdle a thin block of hard wood, in whose center was made a small round hole. Filling this with the thin whittlings, he laid it on the ground ; then taking a long, thin strip, rounded at the point, also prepared for the purpose

he placed it on the top of the whittlings, and commenced rapidly to revolve it between his hands. The friction soon fired the light material, which, with his breath, he fanned to a flame, adding more fuel till the blaze grew larger, when the light was placed under the entire pile.

"Wal, it's time for me to say something, I guess, kase that old, gray, balger-looking, leather-faced chap's made his fire," exclaimed Single Eye.

The light was every moment increasing in brightness. Robert was becoming more uneasy, when he was startled by a cry, similar to the one Assa had uttered at the hunter's request, differing only by the prolonged, mournful sound that followed its first outburst. It seemed to be at quite a distance away, in a direction immediately opposite to where they were.

The Indians started to their feet; each stood with his head turned slightly to one side, listening for its repetition. They had not long to wait. Again it swelled out on the night air and a scene of confusion immediately ensued, during which Robert felt himself rudely touched. Turning, he saw the hunter and the Moligan slowly and with little noise, crawling still farther into the bushes. He instantly set himself to the task of following them, crab fashion. After proceeding in this manner for the distance of one hundred yards or more, the two arose to their feet, and again started toward their wished-for retreat.

"What was the occasion of that signal, and the confusion it created among the Indians?" asked Robert.

Pete, before replying, gave utterance to a dry laugh, and then said:

"Wal, boy, that was my powers."

"Your powers! You do not wish me to believe that you caused what we have just witnessed?"

"Sartin; that's jest what I mean. Egzactly so—positive."

"Are you a ventriloquist as well as an Indian fighter?"

"A what?"

The question was repeated.

"Wal, I'm an Indian-fighter, but don't know any thing 'bout that first thing you called me, whatever it is."

"I mean do you possess the power of causing your voice to sound as if coming from a distance?"

"Oh, you mean my powers? What on 'arth makes you ax such a question? Didnt you hear me? Of course I can."

"And but for it, our earth'y stay, in a probability, would have been short," replied Robert earnestly.

The only danger now to be feared, was in meeting with those whom Single Eye's voice had called out to go to the aid of their supposed companions. The hunter had now taken the lead, Robert following close on him, and Assa bringing up the rear. Thus they proceeded, till, from an exclamation from the hunter, the young man inferred the hole was found.

"Sartin and I sure, we've hit it, like a hungry man after a salmon; and us three, if it comes to a fight, can keep a troop of the varnints off. Don't you think so, Assa?"

Receiving no answer, he turned, but looked in vain; *the Mohigan was gone!*

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE TRAIL.

SIMPSON, finding that Assa was not with them, seemed as if entirely bereft of the power to act. In that Indian was centered all the warmth of his affections. So much had their wild life thrown them together, for mutual protection and council, that the hunter came to regard the Indian as a part of himself. Single Eye knew only too well what had occurred, and, but for the feeling of revenge that began to creep into his breast, would have been an indifferent and reckless guide.

"Young man," he at length said, "they've got Assa sure, and I'm not the chap that's going to lay still while they make a roast of him. You can get to the cave or block-house without me, for I won't ax you to go along after him, 'cause you might get hurt. If I come back, it won't be alone. If I don't, jest tell the boys Pete Simpson's gone to a better country."

"Simpson, to you and the Indian I owe my life; and now that he requires my assistance, he shall have it—that is, if I can offer any," answered Robert.

"Of course you can; ain't two rifles better than one? So, if you'll go, I'll be glad to have you. But we'll go to the cave first, and tell them where we're going. You've got some powder and ball for them a n't you?"

"Yes, I brought as much from the village as I could conveniently carry about me, and should like to leave the most of it with them."

"Wal, let's start, and get back before day. They won't touch the Mohigan till they can all see the sport, but I reckon they'll hear from me before then."

He immediately led the way from their place of shelter, in a direction opposite to that in which they had entered, and directed their course toward the cliff. They were not long in reaching the stream. Turning up its course, and wading in the water, they soon arrived at the overhanging tree. Here Single Eye, fastening his gun to his back, and motioning Robert to do likewise, commenced slowly climbing up to its branches. A few moments enabled them to reach the

ledge, where a preconcerted signal being made, they entered the cabin. In its further extremity burned a small fire, over which was hung some preparation of food. Warm as the weather was without, the heat diffused by the fire made the dampness and cool draft of the place much more pleasant. The entrance of Single Eye and Robert was welcomed with joy, and Lucy busied herself in setting before them a wholesome repast, for which the men prepared with eager appetites. Very little was said until Pete, having satisfied his hunger, remarked to Lucy:

"You see, Miss, I've brought him, but am sorry to say he's going away with me again before morning."

"Why, what for?" inquired all at a breath.

"Wal, I'm sorry so say it, but them tanned Injuns have got hold of Asa somehow, and we're going to try and fetch him back;" and he narrated to them their adventures after they had left the cave.

Robert made use of this opportunity to take Lucy aside, and endeavor to reconcile her to the step he found himself bound in honor and gratitude to take. She plead for him not to incur the hazards of the perilous undertaking, but yielded before his representations of duty and honor.

He kissed her, and then prepared for immediate departure, first dividing the powder and ball equally among those in the cave commissioned with its safety.

"Wal, youngster, you're ready, are you?" inquired Pete.

"Yes," answered Robert.

"Then we'll be off. Jest hand me a half a dozen of them balls, I've got that much room to spare, and perhaps we'll need them. Now, mind what I tell you folks: *don't show your noses outside that hole,*" pointing toward the entrance, "and don't let any Injuns take a peep in. We won't be gone a great while, perhaps a day or two; that is, if we meet with luck. You've got water enough?" he asked, after a moment's silence.

"Plenty, I think, until your return," answered Hendrick.

"Then good-by to you all. Come, lay," and the two left the cave.

A few moments sufficed to see them safely at the bottom of the cliff. Here Pete led the way back in the direction they had come, and a short time found them again in the sink-hole.

"Now, youngster, we'll try and find out what's become of that Mohican. I thought I'd wait till daylight, but if my 'pation they'll start with him without losing time. I'll give them their orders, and they ain't going to waste more time than they can help in this little settlement; they're after bigger game. Now, you keep close behind me, and try and step in my tracks."

The two pressed quickly forward, following the path they had made in coming to the wished-for concealment, though from the turn of events, no use had been made of it. Some twenty minutes perhaps, had elapsed, when the hunter stopped, bending down to examine the ground. Closely inspecting the bushes, he said, in a low tone

"Here's the spot they took him. Look at the ground, and these twigs, how they're broke and bent. I'll tell you, he's fit them some before they got good hold of him. But what's funny is that I didn't hear them. Did you ever follow trails?" he asked, of Robert.

"Never a human being's; I've tracked wolves and deer," replied the young man.

"Wal, you do the looking behind, and I'll try my luck in following them dod-retted serpents that's got that Mohogan friend of mine, *come 'em!*"

The band that had captured Assa evidently belonged to the one that encamped so near to where our three friends were hid. This was clear from the direction the trail led them. As they proceeded, they noticed where single Indians had, from time to time, joined the main body. Their advance now, although they had so broad a trail, was slow, owing to the darkness. Repeatedly, Pete was obliged to proceed some distance on his hands and knees, to keep from losing the trail.

"Consarn it, boy, this is slow work," he said, after being longer than usual endeavoring to keep the track. "I'm going to leave following it, for its my 'panion *they've gone back to the place they started from!*"

Their course was immediately changed, and a few moments sufficed to bring them to where the Indians had so lately camped. No signs of them were to be discovered, yet the hunter, with his accustomed caution would not approach the spot until he had made its entire circuit; then, stepping fearlessly out, he said aloud to his companion, at the same time giving the smouldering embers of the small fire a kick, that a little light might smile on the surroundings:

"They've taken an early start with the Mohogan."

"Which way think you they have gone?"

"Don't know till I look. You take a walk round that side, and I'll go round this; if you can feel—for you can do that better than see—any trail, let's hear from you."

The young man did as he was ordered, but without success. Not the least sign of the passage of a single Indian was discernable. Pete met with better success, but could tell nothing till day broke of the number who had passed.

They had not long to wait; morning was near at hand. As soon as it was light enough to see their way, they set to work to inspect the ground.

There were two trails, both equally broad and distinct, leading from the camp. One in the direction of the block-house, and the other toward Mr. Hendrick's residence. At first, Sampson was at a loss which to take, but, after closely inspecting the two, led off on the one last named.

"Why do you choose this one? I should have taken the other," remarked Robert.

"You'd have had a nice time on it," somewhat sharply replied

the hunter. "You've got to learn a thing or two 'bout trails, afore you can follow one."

"I should like to learn something about it."

"Did you have a good look at the two?" asked the hunter.

"Yea."

"And you would have taken t'other one, eh?"

"I should, most certainly."

"How old are you?"

"I can not see what my age has to do with the matter; I am twenty six."

"Then you're old enough to know a heap better than to take t'other track; that's what I want to say to you."

"Will you not tell me why I should *not* have taken it?"

"Yes, I will after you tell me why you would."

"My reasons are these: that in it the footprints seem to have been taken with greater haste, and are more regular, while with this they are more scattered and irregular."

"And that last reason's the one I'd give for taking this one. Stop," he said, as they passed over a marshy piece of ground, where the prints were very distinct; "which of these marks are the Michigan's?"

"Really, I am unable to say," replied his companion, smiling.

"You needn't smile, youngster. You know more than I do 'bout books, but I can teach you a lesson in the woods. The Great Spirit,"—he always spoke of God in the Indian phrase—"taught some men one thing and some another; some he made to live in the settlements, and others in the woods. Now, I can tell you, as well as if I'd see'd Assa put his foot there, which of them marks is his."

"Show me which are his footprints."

"Sartin, boy, I will. Don't you see all of them are deeper at the toe than at the heel, 'cept this one?"

"I do, but why is this?"

The hunter, as if to make it more clear by example than by language advanced a few steps in a hurried walk, leaving the impression of his footsteps distinctly seen then returned and again passed over, in a manner of reluctance, as if *compelled* to move onward. Robert watched him closely, and the whole thing was at once understood. The first footprints were deep at the toe, while the last were the reverse, the impress of the heel being the most distinct.

"Do you see now how I tell?" asked Single Eye.

"I do really, and am surprised I did not *comprehend* it before."

"As much, I suppose, as if you'd learned your A B C's, and then found them in a book."

The day, by this time, broke in all its splendor, and the birds, flowers and trees seemed rejoicing in the sun's golden beams. The lighter it grew, the more carefully yet hurriedly Simpson pursued the trail, till, at length, Robert was compelled to run by turns to keep up with him. The stream so frequently mentioned was crossed

and recrossed several times. Before the young man was aware, he suddenly found himself opposite Mr. Hendrick's house.

"This looks like home, boy, don't it?" asked the hunter.

"It most certainly does," replied Robert.

On arriving at the house, from the numerous footprints that were seen, it was evident quite a body of Indians had visited it. The embers of a fire were still smoking, and the remains of a meal were here and there scattered about. Pete was more than usually active searching for "signs."

"Have you found any?" inquired the young man, after the space of some time.

Before answering, Simpson looked at the ground a moment, and then raising his head, gazed off in the direction from whence they had come.

"Wal, boy, can't say as I have found any thing very flattering. You see, I thought the Mohigan might have made a mark for me to look at, but drat it if I can see any. He's been here, that's sartin, and I can tell that those consarned varmints ain't in no hurry to get him away."

"How do you know that?"

"Don't you see they've stopped and built a fire to cook by. Now, youngster, if they'd been for going right along they wouldn't have done *that*, do ye see? They don't think we're going to follow them, or they would try and hide their trail. It's my opinion they think we're all shut up in the block house, and enough of their friends round it to bring down any that might start to help get back the Mohigan."

He rose as he spoke, and went to the door of the house. Upon trying it, he found it fast. Next he visited the barn, but all was as it had been left. The Indians had apparently thought, as he had designed they should, that the family had left, not from fear of them, but merely for the purpose of visiting some neighbor. Even such apparently little things as these were noticed by the savages, and served to allay their feelings of revenge at having been baffled or outwitted.

"This does not surprise me. I have heard of a pioneer who, regardless of the depredations that were being made by the savages on his neighbors, for a while would not carry his rifle with him to his work. While he did so, he was not molested; but at last being persuaded, he went armed. The Indians seeing this, concluded he had lost confidence in them, and that he intended to use it against them, immediately killed him. Again, I know of a case where a family retired, night after night, leaving their window-shutters unfastened, and remained safe from an attack, while scarce a house, for miles around, but was burned, and the inmates left weltering in their blood. Finally, becoming distrustful, they secured their blinds, and the very night they did so, an attack was made, their house burned, and only one of that family of eight escaped the general slaughter.

I am sure you will not agree with me, Simpson, but I think there is a point of honor with the Indian, and one that he very seldom deviates from, which is, never to allow a favor shown, or confidence reposed in him, to remain in the scale of indebtedness, if it is possible to recompense the person who has bestowed the favor. This is sometimes not done; yet, if we trace the cause, we will find it sufficient to account for the omission. When the first settlers of this country sought its shores, they were, in most cases, received without molestation by these children of the woods, and when the tomahawk began its bloody work, we see the first instigation in the acts and procedure of the whites. The decent, and, in a great measure, the cruelty practiced by them, have been taught them by the very men who now condemn them most, and who had and still have it in their power to settle all things amicably with these savages."

"Yes, jest so; but it's a pity you've got done! You'd better take up preaching for a living; and if you think so much of the red devils why don't you go live with them? You don't mean to tell me that we whites have taught them how to kill children and women, and burn men to death, do you? Kase if you do, I'll up and tell you you lie, and you can make the most on it. I'll be switched if ever I heard a white man talk up for a sneaking Ingin afore! But, we won't quarrel, and I guess it's best to be on the move."

The two started forward. The idea seemed highly to delight Single Eye, that no pains had been taken to conceal their trail, and as he hurried on, he would break out now and then in a dry laugh. This appeared so singular to his companion, that he at length asked the reason.

"You ax me why I seem so pleased? It's kase I can follow without having to look much for their marks. But, hullo! what's this?" he exclaimed, as they came to the spot where the Mohican had killed the last of the two runners, their blood still to be seen on some of the leaves and dry twigs.

"It can not be that the Mohican is wounded?" inquired Robert.

"Not he; and don't you see this blood's old? It's one of them two Wampanoag runners he told us he'd wiped out, and he showed us their scalps so we'd know he warn't telling a lie."

This settled the surmise, and they moved on. Toward the early part of the afternoon, they arrived where the halt had been made by Asa's captors, and here Simpson again commenced his search for signs. Robert opened a wallet in which was a small supply of food, but his request for the hunter to partake of it received no answer, so intently was Simpson engaged, trying to decipher some rude marks on the bark of a large tree which grew close by the trail.

"What have you found?" asked Robert.

"Only a scratch or two the Mohican's made."

"Have you interpreted it?"

"What?"

"Can you make out what it means?"

"Wal, yes, pretty near; he's only told me how many are with him, and when they were here."

"And how many does he say?"

"Only eight."

"Only eight!" exclaimed Robert, echoing the hunter's words, "and pray are not eight enough?"

Single Eye looked at him a moment, and said, while an expression of contempt settled on his face:

"If you're skeered you can go home. Fight! and what's that number to my powers? I only wish there was about one hundred of the consurned varmints to have the fun of seeing them leave."

"But we are only two! one against four."

"Boy, I tell ye you can take the back track if you don't want to go ahead; but if you do keep along, you'll think when we get up to them, and I begin to have a talk around, that the hull of the men down in the settlements couldn't make 'em scatter any quicker than I will."

"I rely on your judgment, but I do not see at all how we are likely to meet with success, in view of the odds against us."

"You'll go along then, will you?"

"I would not turn my back now from death itself."

"I ax your pardon, youngster, for looking kinder mean at you a while ago, but it's my way. You ain't no coward, but you forgot my powers. 'wenwillyouqursem,' as you call it."

"I did, indeed, but now I am reminded of it, I can see some chance for success, provided the Indians can not account for it."

"They find it out? Why, heh, Assa thinks its the Great Spirit himself and not me, and I've told him better many a time. You'll laugh when you see what a scattering they'll make. They'll make the dust fly out o' mud, they'll travel so fast!"

"Pale-face no say right—he lie," came in low, guttural tones.

Robert sprung to his feet in a moment. The voice seemed that of an Indian, and came apparently from a small growth of chestnut bushes on their right. The hunter sought the shelter of a tree, and stood, seemingly waiting an attack. Some slight motion in the shrubbery caused the young man to bring his rifle to bear on it, and he was about to fire, believing it to be an enemy, when Simpson broke out into a hearty laugh.

"Hold hard, boy, don't kill a little bird for an Injin."

"But that voice, Pete—oh!" he checked himself as he saw the trick that had been played on him, and turning, noticed the hunter convulsed with laughter, leaning against the tree.

"Wal," he at length said, as he recovered his breath, "wal, that's the best thing, sartin, I ever see'd. Thought the red-skins would see into it, did you? and yet get gulled yourself! Say, boy, honor bright, did you think you heard an Injin?"

"I would have sworn I did."

Single Eye's laughter broke out afresh as he continued:

"What a hunter you'd make! Gosh, going to shoot a chippy

bird for an Injin. Guess you'll believe I'm able now to skare them red serpents when I can start the white sweat on you."

"I have nothing more to say. I most certainly did not think it was you that spoke."

"I'm sure you didn't. But I'm hungry; so let's take a bite, and we'll be moving."

The young man seemed rather mortified that the hunter had so completely deceived him. He proceeded silently to gather the food that, in his hasty scramble for cover, he had scattered, and returned it to his wallet. Single Eye, in the meanwhile, was refreshing himself on dried deer's flesh and coarse Indian bread, which he seemed rather to cram down his throat than eat in a more Christian-like-way.

The gloom of approaching night was settling darkly on the surrounding landscape, when our two friends turned into the gorge of the hill where their foe had encamped. Although so much time had been allowed to elapse during the day, by their frequent halts, it had amply been made up when moving on the trail, by the long, and seemingly awkward strides of Pete, enabling him to pass over more ground than would be imagined. His companion was obliged to quicken his own pace, frequently into a run, to enable him to keep up. The nearer he approached his foe, the more eager he became. Robert had never seen him assume the character which he now betrayed. It seemed as if his entire white nature had given place to the promptings and desires of the red-man, with whom he had so much mingled. His face appeared to grow actually darker in its expression, and his eye to emit sparks of vindictive hate. The remarks he occasionally addressed to the young man were rather jerked out in quick, detached sentences, than spoken.

"Boy, I'm going to let them heathens ketch me," said Simpson, turning and facing the young man suddenly.

"Let them take you captive?" he exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Sartin," was the single, emphatic reply.

"And what am I to do?"

"Hide when the time comes."

CHAPTER V.

CAUGHT AT LAST:

WHEN the Mohican and his two friends left their hiding-place and proceeded toward the sink-hole, the sharp snap of a twig informed Area that if they were not actually followed, one of their foes was close at hand. He did not stop to weigh the chances of a hand-to-

Land conflict, but acted immediately on the feeling that raged uppermost in his own breast, and stepping aside softly from the track, crouched like a tiger waiting for his prey, in the approach of what he supposed was a single enemy.

Had Single Eye, instead of Robert, been next to him, he would have been instantly missed; but the young man's only thought was to arrive at their wished-for retreat—consequently no idea that the Mohigan had left them entered his mind.

The Mohigan had miscalculated, as it turned out, to his cost. Unsuspectingly enough came on the Indian he had heard, and Assi was in hopes of an easy victory; but just at the moment when about to make the spring, he found himself in the grasp of a foe whom he had not noticed. A struggle for freedom now commenced, yet, with all his efforts, he was not able to free himself. He was in the hands of a man much his superior in strength, and, being held from behind, the advantages were all against him, still, he continued his endeavors, now being uppermost, and now under his foe. The noise of the conflict, if it could so be called, soon brought others to the spot, and he was overpowered and bound.

His first promptings were, to notify his friends, by signal, of what had happened, but on a moments reflection, he decided it was best to have his captors believe that he was without assistance, so that a plan could be arranged for his deliverance by Single Eye, with more chance of success than would attend the trial if now made.

After a short consultation, the bands on his feet were loosed and he was harried back to where the larger body of Indians still were. Here a council was quickly formed, and it was decided to send so important a prisoner to King Philip himself.

Although, as stated in the commencement of the story, this was the first war between the whites and Indians, as an entire body, still, individual feuds between the hunter and savage were occurring day after day. In these, Single Eye and his Indian friend had taken prominent parts—the latter on account of his native prejudice, and the former being led into them by his friendship to the Mohigan. The capture of Assi, on these grounds, was considered of great importance; while the fact of his marriage into their confederacy, and his animosity to them since that event, rendered it necessary that their king should deal with him. A small band was selected as an escort, and Assi being placed in their charge, preparations for an immediate start were made.

Arriving at Mr. Hendrick's residence, they stopped long enough to prepare and eat a hasty meal, and again resumed their journey.

Not a word did the Mohigan utter from the first moment of his captivity. The whirlwind of thought that raged in his bosom left no traces on his calm, haughty face. He indifferently obeyed all the orders given him, and heard the decision of his destination with as much indifference as if he had understood not one word of their language. The footprints that had called forth the questions from Rob-

ert, and the explanations from Single Eye, he had purposely made, to shew the direction taken. The ventriloquial power the hunter possessed was held by him in awe, believing it to be a superhuman gift granted him by the Great Spirit, and in this his main hope of rescue lay.

After starting from Mr. Henrick's house, his captors led the way directly back on the old track he and Pete had made on their first arrival. So often had it since been traveled, that it now presented the appearance of a well-worn footpath. No pains seemed to be taken to hide their trail, but, forming the opinion that no pursuit would be made, trusted entirely in the numbers that surrounded the block-house, to cut off any that should attempt it. They accounted for the appearance of the Mohigan in this way: he had been sent out as a spy, they believed; and being totally ignorant of the existence of the cave, and of course those within it, judged that Single Eye with the rest of the inhabitants of the settlement were within the walls of the fort. For the further operations of the hunter it was well that they arrived at these conclusions, else he would have found it an almost impossible thing to follow his friend.

Silently, and with little haste, the band conducting Assa continued on. As they passed the spots where he had killed their two friends, they turned such looks of deadly hate on him, that he perceived, if it were in their power, his fate would be quickly sealed.

At noon they halted for a short time, and the Mohigan found an opportunity of leaving a mark on a tree unnoticed by them. After eating a simple meal, they again advanced, but taking an entirely different direction to the one they had been pursuing. As the sun began slowly declining toward the western horizon, they selected a spot to encamp for the night. Safely securing the Mohigan, they left him in charge of two of their number, while the rest busied themselves in collecting fuel, and preparing food. While this was being done, the two who were left to watch his actions, commenced for their own amusement, to taunt him, speaking in their own language words to this effect:

"The Mohigan is a woman to the great children of the Wampanoags. A dog that can bark and not bite. He is like the snow of winter that melts and runs away before the children of the great Philip. He is a snake in the grass that dare not show himself, but lays hid and bites. Will the Mohigan strike, as the great warrior hurled the tomahawk by his head? Will he not tremble then? Will he not shrink when the flame burns slowly away his flesh, and will his voice then sing his death-song without a quiver? Does he think the Great Spirit will welcome him to the happy hunting-grounds? No, his scalp shall hang in the wigwams of the great warrior, and he shall point it out to his children and say, 'There hangs the token of a dog.' The Mohigan shall not live after death; he shall never chase the bounding deer over the broad woods and across the singing streams of those happy grounds, but shall be like a dog, and the wolves shall carry off his bones. Ugh! I spit on him."

The Mohigan neither looked up or pretended he heard the words that were addressed to him, but they entered his heart with a sting like the arrow's point. They continued for some time endeavoring to make him show evidences of feeling, but seeing how useless it was, desisted, and joined their companions in the repast that was now prepared.

A small portion of food had been set before the captive, of which he ate sparingly. His bands were then readjusted, and all save one, who was left to watch, were soon in a sound slumber.

Asa felt assured that before the night passed he would hear something from his friend. He lay with closed eyes as if sleeping, but was, in truth, keenly awake—his brain was unusually active. Now and again he would carefully take a look at his captors, and endeavor to invent some plan by which their sculps could be transferred to his belt, without too much risk to himself. Slowly the night wore away, the fire had died down to a few smouldering embers, and the air seemed alive with night insects. From the marshy ground below came the hoarse croak of the frog, now and then interspersed with the plaintive cry of the whippowill. To the wakeful ear of the captive these sounds were particularly noticed. He seemed tired at last listening, or gazing up through the tree tops at the twinkling stars, and was composing himself for slumber, when the tremulous voice of a tree-toad from some near point caused him to start almost imperceptibly. Sleep was banished at once from his eyelids.

The rest seemed also to hear it, for they stirred in their sleep, then awoke, and rose to their feet. After listening to a few words hurriedly pronounced by the guard, three of them immediately vanished in the woods toward the direction from whence the sound came.

CHAPTER VI.

SINGLE EYE'S "POWERS."

AFTER Single Eye had given Robert his last order, he turned from him, and slowly continued on, but with much less caution than hitherto. The feelings of the young man were, to say the least, not a very pleasant one, but he continued to follow his companion in silence.

"Now, lad, it's time for me to let them varmints know I'm a-come, you mind what I'm going to tell you. Ye see, as I said, I'm going to let them heathens get their paws on me. But if I don't hate to, kase it's the first time. But, it's a whim I've took. Now I want you to get out of the way, and keep there till you see them march

me into camp. Then you crawl up *in sight*. I'll make noise enough so they can't hear you. Get that shooting-iron of yours ready then, but mind, don't use it unless you see I'm in a fix."

Robert saw conclusively it would be useless to argue the point with his eccentric companion. Merely nodding his head, he at once plunged into the thicket. Simpson looked after him a moment, and then continued on a few rods. Once more stopping, he uttered the signal which aroused not only Assa but his captors to activity.

The rustling sound that soon met his ear told him his enemies were on the search. Feeling around, he found a dry twig, and pressing lightly on it broke it, causing a sharp, distinct snap which immediately reached the ear of the Indians. The three suddenly met face to face with Single Eye.

The sight of the hunter seemed to deprive them of action. His name and person were immediately recognized. The daring attacks which he had so often made on members of their tribe, had impressed the Wampanongs with the greatest awe of his prowess and resources.

Not long, however, did they remain inactive. Their rifles were quickly brought to their shoulders; but Pete, without seeming to regard the peril, coolly said:

"Guess you'd better think twice afore you fire, ye blasted varnints. That king of yours, the biggest nigger of the bunch, would give you a good situation if you'd bring Single Eye alive and kicking to him. O, you're afraid of Nancy be you? Wal, here, I ain't going to fight when there's no chance of coming off best." He stooped, and laid his rifle gently on the ground, together with his knife and tomahawk, and then continued: "Wal, you ain't afraid of me now, though I could lick the hull of you with my fists, I do believe."

As if in answer to his question, they advanced, and the hunter allowed himself to be bound without resistance. This seemed much to astonish them, and some suspicion was felt, that assistance must be near at hand, for one of them asked:

"Why Single Eye let Injin tie—no make fight—have big many friends come bum-by?"

"No, you brindle critter, I ain't; but what on 'arth's the use of making a fuss when it ain't no good?"

No reply was vouchsafed to this, and they motioned Pete to proceed, winding their way back to their companions, who immediately rekindled the fire, so as to have a better look at their distinguished prisoner. It is impossible to describe the astonishment that was plainly visible on the face of Assa, as the light of the fire revealed to him his friend a captive like himself. It gave way to a feeling of despair, and the hunter, as he saw it, could not but feel sympathy for him. Suddenly breaking out in his usual dry laugh, he exclaimed:

"Wal, Mohigan, we're in a fix, *sure!* Kinder think we'll get our hair *ris* this time!"

A simple look from Asa was all the answer he vouchsafed, but that was all the hunter wished to elicit by his remark. Noticing that the Indians were not, at that moment, observing him, he opened his mouth, and with his eye rapidly glanced around him on all sides. That look spoke volumes to his friend, and convinced him that Single Eye had allowed himself to become a prisoner.

Robert had, in the meanwhile, gained a situation where all that passed could be observed by him, without the slightest risk of being seen. He was wondering what next Simpson would do toward the accomplishment of his plan.

"I say, Mr. red-skin, you ain't going to keep me standing here like a post, for you to look at, be ye? I'm kinder tired follering you all this time since you started, and wouldn't mind laying down a little afore morning."

In answer to this question, the entire party rose at a signal from their leader, and, instead of granting his request, they conducted the hunter to a large oak tree, and securely bound him to its body in an upright position. Single Eye made no resistance, and, what was still more surprising, remained silent.

Perhaps half an hour might have passed, when, to the ears of the Indians, came the indistinct sound of a voice from somewhere above them. They paused to listen, when again it was heard, first on their right, and then on their left. Instant confusion was manifested, and from their language—which, as before stated, the hunter was acquainted with—he learned that a feeling of superstitious dread was taking possession of them. This he did not allow in the least to subside.

The voice again spoke, this time in clear, distinct tones from above, and in their language:

"The Great Spirit hides his face from his children. He is angry with them. Why have they bound hand and foot one of their red brothers? Is not the forest large enough for both to build their wigwams? Is there no other enemy, but that they must seek each other's lives? The children of the Wampanoag are wrong. Their Father is not pleased with them."

The voice had scarce died away before every Indian, except Asa, had prostrated himself upon the ground.

"Thunder and lightning," exclaimed Pete, "what on 'at 's that? A ghost, as sure as I've got but one eye. Hullo, red-skin, jist untie my hands, if ye please, for I want to make myself skee. Say, you, do you hear?" he said, as he saw from their actions they were about to beat a hasty retreat; but they took no notice of him. "Darned if it ain't mean to leave a chap tied here for them spookey things to carry off. Say, you big fellow, jist cut these strings, and I'll call you a gentleman."

The Indian he last addressed was the chief of the party, who, although his companions had already fled, seemed loth to leave. Turning, as Pete spoke, he said, while his voice trembled with pent-up fury, and his hand clutched his tomahawk:

"Curse white devil! Great Manitou no say no kill him. Me carry Single Eye scalp to great Philip. Pale face dog—snake—devil—die."

He tore his weapon from his belt, and circling it in whirling eddies around his head for a moment, commenced its downward course toward its intended victim; but it never reached him. A stream of fire leaped from the opposite thicket, and the sharp report of Robert's rifle told the savage's death. The uplifted arm remained a moment, as if paralyzed. An indescribable expression of acute anguish flitted over the already death-stricken countenance. The Indian swayed to and fro for a moment, and then fell prone forward against the hunter, and from thence to the earth, the body, strange to say, remaining some time in a sitting position, the head thrown back, and the glassy eye fixed upon the face of his enemy.

"Whew! if I want nearer kingdom come then than I ever was before in my life—Robert Willet, you've got a friend in Pete Simpson to your dying day, boy, if he lives that long. You've done me a good turn, but suppose you do me another, by cutting those blasted thongs."

Robert, as soon as he fired, had rushed forward from his concealment. He quickly cut the fastenings of both the hunter and Indian. The latter instantly rose to his feet, and giving a shake as if to assure himself he was entirely loose, extended his hand to the young man, who shook it warmly.

"Assa get warrior's scalp for friend."

"No, no. I do not want it," he answered, with an expression of disgust at the proposal.

"No want? It good. Give it Mahigan?"

"Yes, certainly, you may have it, Assa."

The Indian proceeded to the dead body, and quickly removed the trophy, saying to Pete, as he did so:

"Few days on war-path—many scalps—no hurt!"

"Yes, you're right about that; but I swear I come pretty near getting my walking papers this time. Jewsharps! what a mess I'm in to see that pretty gal in the cave. Why on 'arth couldn't that consarned critter fall some other way than right by? I say, boy, I'm looking kinder red, ain't I?"

"You are most certainly bloody, Simpson."

"Wal, lad; what do you think of my powers now?"

"They are really wonderful, and a man possessing them who follows the same kind of life you do, must hold them of more value to him."

"If I had time, I'd tell you some scrapes they've got me out of afore now, but I ain't."

"How did you first learn to use your voice in that way?"

"When I was a young man, and afore I did much among the reds, I'd be for trying to mock wolves, birds, tails and all them kind of things. Wal, one day I was mocking an old hunting, and I

tell you he . . . le me get down pretty low with my voice, when I kinder thought the noise I was making 'peared off' from me. First I got skeered, kase I knew I was making of it; but I got over that, and went to work practicing, and now you know pretty well what I can do in that line."

As morning broke, the hunter descended the side of the hill, and, after washing as much of the red stains from his clothes as he could, at a rapid little brook that ran at its base, he returned. Partaking of their simple breakfast, the trio started.

"Michigan, how did you come to be caught?" asked the hunter, after a moment's silence.

"Want more scalp—so stay back."

"I told you so, youngster. I know that Michigan as well as he does himself," said Pete to Robert.

"So it appears. But I was thinking of something—of our friends in the black-house."

"Wal, boy, I'd like to know 'bout them myself."

"I would propose that, after visiting the cave, we try and effect an admittance there."

The hunter hesitated long before replying. At length, with a shake of his head, he answered:

"I'll think about that. You see, boy, I'd sooner be on the outside with those varmints, than in that black-house. I could get there easy enough, but the job would be how to get back, for there's enough of them to watch us on all sides. Howsomever, I'll think about it, as I said. Walk up a little faster, for that long-legged chap of an Injin's got ahead of us."

CHAPTER VII.

THE UNKNOWN.

We must now return and note the events which transpired within the black-house after Robert's departure.

No Indian war that has afflicted the country caused the public mind to become so thoroughly aroused, as this war with Philip. The wily savage, unlike the other leaders of his race, experienced no discouragement from defeat, or disappointment at non-success, but toiled on till the death-stroke of one of his own nation ended his bloody career.

The conspiracy formed in his brain was no impulse of a moment, no act of excited thought, but the carefully sifted and deliberate plan of his life. And now that the English had first provoked contest,

(as he assumed,) he determined to leave no means untried for its accomplishment.

It is not the fierce, sudden outbreak of public feeling that arouses into sympathy of consternation the entire community, but the slowly gathering gloom of the tempest, with its deep-toned thunder speaking and impressing the stern fact of danger, that makes all men one. It was this that had gathered the people in the block-house, and made them ready for the stern ordeal. As the distant report of Asa's rifle reached their ears, the sturdy pioneers handled their weapons with sterner grasp, while wives, mothers and sisters gathered closer to their protectors.

"That sound bodes no good to some poor creature," said Dickons, the person whom Robert had left in charge of the fort.

"Indeed it does not, to them or us either," answered a neighbor.

"You say truly, Mr. Hardeman; it is a sound that warns us of what we are to expect," replied Dickons. "I shudder at the thought, but, if you noticed the direction it came from, you will remark that it was somewhere near Mr. Hendrick's house."

"True, but his family have, by this time, removed," replied Mr. Hardeman.

"It was not the family I was thinking of, but of Willet. When he left us, he spoke of rejoining Simpson there, and perhaps they may have left before he arrived, and he has attempted to find their whereabouts."

"God forbid any harm should happen him. We have not his like in any other of our young men."

"I say amen to that prayer, and hope these reports were not caused by his being discovered by the Indians."

"Do you not think it strange that Single Eye has not been down to see us?" Dickons asked, after a moment's pause.

"Depend upon it, Simpson will be on hand at the proper time. He sent Willet down from Mr. Hendrick's, where he met him, to inform us to be in readiness to meet the coming Indians. He is, no doubt, providing for the safety of that family, as they have not in common with us, sought the block-house for safety."

"Have we no one among us who would venture to explore the surrounding woods? The enemy may have already arrived."

"Although it is a delicate matter to ask a man to jeopardize his life for the safety of the rest, still it had better be done."

"How long is it since we heard that firing?"

"Nearly four hours, I should say."

"And what time is it now?"

"About midnight. I don't like this unbroken stillness; it has a significant meaning."

The position they occupied while holding this short dialogue, was on the top of the block-house; and it being a clear starlight night, their figures were to be distinctly traced against the sky, affording an excellent aim for the lynx-eye of the Indian.

Mr. Harleman hardly had turned to descend, when the whip-like crack of a rifle, from some close quarter, broke that silence, and a ball buried itself in a log near where the men stood. Both immediately bent their bodies beneath the shelter of the low breastwork, and rapidly descended.

The principal part of the villagers they found gathered in groups. An excitement was prevailing equal to that of the previous morning, and, with all his endeavors, Dickson found it impossible to quiet it. He was flooded with questions as to how they should act; and, before time was given for a reply, another was asked, till, at length, he became so entirely confused as to be unable to utter a single direction, and the command seemed to devolve on each particular one.

The three remaining runners, who had given over the pursuit of the Mohican, after remaining some little while with the bodies of their late companions, finally, hoping that they might fall in with some one of the villagers, and avenge their loss, drew lots, in the usual Indian manner, as to which of them should remain beside the dead bodies. One of the traits of the Indian character is a natural propensity to gamble. We have seen, at the United States trading-post of the Crow-wing, on the northern Mississippi, the Chippewa tribe lose the whole of their share of the payments in a few hours, by a game of cards. Before they became acquainted with this mode of play, shown them by the white man, they had resort to one of their own inventions, which was extremely simple. A selection was made of two distinctly colored stones, generally white and black. The stakes were then made, and one of the number, placing his hands behind him a moment, would then extend them toward his opponent, with the palms downward, for him to make the selection. If he touched the hand containing the white stone he won; if the other, he, of course, lost; and so intent would they become in this absorbing game, that it has been known, between two persons of different tribes, who were at peace with each other, for one of them to lose all of his money—which consisted of trinkets—then to stake his gun or bow, then his tomahawk, knife, and even his clothes; losing these, he had at last offered his life, which was as readily accepted as any of the other pledges; and, losing even that, would calmly bend his head for the deathblow, which the winner would inevitably deal his scalp being the final reward.

In this way had it been decided by the trio who should remain, and the two successful ones immediately started forward. Not finding, as they hoped to have done, some one on whom to wreak their vengeance in the village, they had, unnoticed by the sentinel of the black-house, approached it, and, seeing the figures of Dickson and Harleman standing on the parapet, had fired at them in the darkness.

At this trying moment, Providence, who seemed to direct this little band from the commencement, came to their relief in the person of

an entire stranger, one who was unknown to all—never having been seen in that neighborhood before.

When distraction and inactivity had taken the place of decided action, and when those strong and willing minded men were but lacking the controlling power of a leader, a loud shout from the outside was heard, and a voice exclaimed:

"Open the door! A friend and defender wants admittance!"

The door was soon unbarred, and the form of a tall, gaunt man stood revealed. His face bore the marks of many a storm; want and exposure had left many deep furrows upon it. His eagle eye scanned the faces of the men before him a moment, and then asked, in the quick, stern tones of one born to command;

"How are you off for powder and ball in this house?"

"We have enough of both to last a month of hard fighting," answered Dickons.

"Good," he replied; "but let's take a general look at this building, and see how strong it is."

Dickons led the way. The stranger followed, now and then striking the logs, and running his eye over the joints.

"You're pretty safe here," he exclaimed. "There's some rotten timber, but I guess there's men enough to fight the red devils outside if they do make a hole in it. Who's Captain among you?" he abruptly asked.

"I was, but if you will accept the office, you are now," replied Dickons.

"That I will," he added, bluntly. "But I'm a fighting man, and you ain't got no child's play before you, with them heathens, for there's quite a nest of them. Now, I want all the women-folks to go up on the other floor; it's safest there, and if they do hear a half a dozen rifles crack at once, or the red-skins singing some of their ditties, I don't want them to make any nonsense by crying and screeching."

This order was immediately obeyed, and the entire number of women and children conveyed above. He next stationed the men in different parts of the building, with strict orders not to wander from their places, nor for a moment to relax their watchfulness. A few of those who were the youngest and most active he retained for his own purpose.

Thus in a few moments, under his control, was the blackhouse placed on the footing of defense. The men, borrowing from his determined manner, calmly waited the approach of their enemy.

The night passed without an attack, though the vigilance was not in any way relaxed for a single moment. Sometime before day, the Unknown gathered those around him whom he had selected, and leading them apart, that his words might not be heard by others, said:

"It's my opinion them red-skins are not lying still all this night for nothing, but are hatching up some infernal plan. You see these Indians are better at planning than most persons think. They know

It's no use to waste powder and ball on logs, and run the risk of losing men by our fire; so they are trying to find out some way to get at us, and at the same time save their own skulls from being bored. I want five of you to volunteer to go with me, *now*, and take a look outside for ourselves, to see if we can find them, and without their finding us. I'll tell you honest, it's a bad job, and I can't say how many of you will come back alive, so I don't want to ask you to go, without you're willing; but, if any of you have got mothers or sisters, you ought to run the risk for their sake, kase there's no telling what them critters will do, or at what time they'll begin, unless we find out from them. We can't do *that* unless we go and take a look at them ourselves. Now who'll go?"

Over a dozen offered at once. Making a selection, he prepared to start. Before leaving he saw Dickons, and gave directions how to manage during his absence. On no account was the door to be opened for them if they returned while it was dark, unless the signal was first made of the barking of a fox, and even then the greatest precaution was to be taken.

No words were spoken for many moments after their departure. Those remaining seemed impressed with the great danger attending the undertaking; and now, that the Unknown was not with them to inspire all by his powerful will, a sense of insecurity began to be again painfully felt. Yet, by the activity of Dickons, the men retained their places, and the women, by assuming a cheerful appearance, aided much in reassuring them. The direction taken by the Unknown was a direct line for the village, keeping close to a small belt of trees that grew close to the left of the clearing on which the block house was built. He would halt his men at times, himself advancing alone in the capacity of scout, carefully noting every place where a lurking savage could be concealed, then returning, would lead them as far as he had surveyed. Thus they proceeded until the village was reached. Once there he felt himself comparatively safe; and yet, with much caution, but at a quicker pace, each house was inspected. To his great surprise no traces of their enemy were to be discovered, nor were there any signs of the savages having yet visited the place.

"Boys," he said, "you can depend on it, them Injuns are under the control of an old head. I don't think Phillip's with them now, but if I ain't much mistaken, he's been with them up to a short time, and has left the command in the hands of one of his best warriors. This war, before the colonies see the last of it, is going to cost some lives and much money. But," he added, as if speaking to himself, "I'm puzzled what to make of this, for the town's the first place I thought they'd make for," then raising his voice, he cried, "We've got a worse job than I bargained for; but you keep close to me and do just as I say, and you'll come out right in the end. Now—"

The sentence was unspoken. The eagerness with which he bent forward and listened, convinced those who were with him that, at last, some trace of the Indians had been found.

"Here, in here all of you!" he said, in a hurried whisper leading them toward a shed whose door stood open; "one of them critters is coming this way. Don't stir till I tell you, and if he's alone he's as good as dead. Stay where you are till I return!"

These orders were given in quicker time than it takes to write them, and while his last words were still sounding, he was gone.

The tramp of a single foot was now distinctly heard by all, and the shadowy outline of a human form passed close by the door. Scarce had he lost himself in the darkness, when to their awakened ear was heard a sound as if of some blow being struck on a hollow substance, a stifled cry, a gurgling, choking sound, and all was still again. In a moment hurried steps were heard, and the stranger was with them.

"Guess that snake won't trouble us. I hate to kill a man when my blood isn't up; but, it had to be done, for he would have soon found out we were here, and then our chances of getting back would have been bad. But it's getting light, and more where he comes from will soon be along; so we'll get back to the black-house as soon as possible. I've stirred their nest and got their blood up, and that's all I wanted; they'll fight open now for revenge's sake."

They immediately started, taking the same direction back which they had come, passing the dead body of the Indian, who lay on his back, the blood still oozing from a wound in his chest, while on the forehead was observed the mark of a knife forming a cross. The Unknown seemed to read by the expression of his companions' countenances what thoughts were passing within.

"That's my mark. I did it to let them know who's around, and I'm of opinion it's going to hurt their feelings when they see that sign. If it don't, *this* will."

His hand fell on the rough handle of his knife, and an expression of hate passed over his features.

"You seem to have very little affection for the Indian!" one of the number remarked.

He stopped, and turning short about, answered in a voice that sounded almost unearthly, so deep, so hollow were its tones;

"*Affection!* I hate them. I am an outcast, a hunted man, and the Indian has shown me no kindness in my wanderings, extended me no helping hand, but, on the contrary, they have themselves been my worst enemy, and my soul has borrowed from their *hate*. *I hate them!*"

He stood for a moment, and then, as if ashamed of having allowed his feelings to so far master him, turned and walked rapidly on.

The men could not help remarking the difference of language he now used to that of his ordinary speech, and felt, in their own minds, that he was other than he seemed, although the circumstance was quickly forgotten in the whirl and excitement of events.

By this time it had become quite light, and each of that little band felt in himself that their return was to be effected with much danger; yet their guide still led them on without hesitancy.

They had gained the belt of timber before mentioned, and were on the point of hoping that they would not be molested, when their guide suddenly stopped, and said, ably :—

“Look to your priming ! Keep one of these trees in front of you, and if we have to do a little fighting you had better stick together by twos; but mind to keep an eye on me, now and then ! These Indians have got ahead of us some now, and as the block-house is where we want to get to, we’ve got to get ahead of them.”

He instantly set the example by placing a tree between himself and the direction in which they wished to go; then, carefully peering about, he glided quickly to another; his companions imitating his example. Thus they continued to advance, for some time, until they beheld their guide stop, and quickly raise his rifle to his shoulder, then lower it again, and with a *rap* quick as thought, spring from behind the tree that sheltered him, and reach another that grew a short distance farther on. As rapidly as this movement had been taken, it was greeted by the report of several guns, and the woods seemed suddenly alive with Indians. The Unknown selected his man, and the report of his rifle with the sharp, agonizing cry that followed, spoke the death of one of the foe.

“Now, boys, we’re in for it in earnest. Keep in pairs, and only one fire at a time ! Let the other use his gun if they make a rush, and don’t give an inch of ground !”

The Indians had retired after their loss, and the little band were enabled to make more rapid progress.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BLOCK-HOUSE.

From the block-house could now be distinctly seen the endeavors of the little band to reach it, yet no assistance could be given them, unless by allowing a party of its defenders to go to their assistance, which Dickens would by no means listen to, not knowing but that it might cause a general attack on all sides. The Unknown seemed to be well aware that as long as they had the shelter of the little woody belt, their chances were good; but his greatest dread was the rush they would have to make when opposite the fort. It was most of the distance within rifle range of the wood, and without the shelter of a single tree. His thoughts, however, he kept to himself, and toiled on to arrive at the nearest point to it, now and then cheering on his followers, and from his quickness of motion, frustrating the plans of his savage foe.

"Men, we've got to reach there one at a time," he said, as at length they reached a point opposite the block-house. "Get together as close as you can, and then the one I name make a start. Don't go off in a straight line, but kinder run from one side to another, so as to make their aim bad. The rest of you take down any red-skin that shows himself. Are you ready?"

The answer was an affirmative, and, calling the name of one of their number, he bade him start. Scarcely had he showed himself from behind his friendly shelter, when he was greeted by a loud yell, followed by the report of several of the Indians' guns. The stranger cast a hurried glance toward the flying man, and seeing that he had not been hit, carefully looked from behind his tree, but as quickly withdrew, as a ball knocked of the bark in a shower close where his head had been.

"Oh, you're up there, are you; but if I know any thing you'll be coming down soon. What will you give me not to shoot, say? Much obliged to you though for letting me see you before you'd done any damage," he said, partly speaking to himself, and bringing his rifle to bear on the tree-top. "Keep still a moment," he continued, "if you don't I'll try you flying. There, that'll do," and his rifle's crack echoed through the woods.

The sight that now met the eye of whites and Indians caused both to suspend hostilities, and gaze with horror on the scene.

In the topmost branches of the tree he had fired at, was observed the form of an Indian brave, endeavoring to retain his position by wildly clutching the branches for support. He was mortally wounded, and from his side weltered slowly but steadily his life-blood, dropping with distinctness on the leaves below, as if keeping stroke to the beat of time that was now tolling his last hour. As moment after moment passed, he grew weaker; the gun that he attempted to raise dropped from his grasp; yet his passions manifested themselves by striking his knife into the bark of the tree with weakening fury. The position he had at first retained, by pressing his body against the tree, by means of a crooked limb, could no longer be kept. Slowly, inch by inch, he slid from his hold till he hung only by his hands, yet not a word escaped him, though from the expression of his face could be read his dying thoughts.

The Unknown, seizing on this awful moment, that seemed almost providentially offered, said to his companions:

"Now, run for it *all of you*, while they are looking at that chap up there. I'll stay and keep them back if I can."

They started, and arrived almost within range of their friends' guns, but not beyond those of their enemies, before they were noticed, so interested were the Indians gazing at their straggling companion in the tree. But just as safety was within their grasp, a volley fired after them struck two of the number; they fell to rise no more. It was answered by the single report of the Unknown's gun, and turning a glance backward, the survivors noted him following

with the fleetness of a deer, springing rapidly from side to side, in such a manner as to render it impossible for his enemies to take a true aim at him, though their every loaded gun was discharged.

The gate of the block-house was thrown wide open to receive them, but the congratulations offered were dampened by the death of their two companions.

"Listen to the music they are making over the dead body of their friend that dropped from the tree before I started," remarked the stranger, after recovering his breath.

"Yes," replied Dickons; "I can not conceive a more appropriate sound than the Indian howl, in giving vent to his feelings, be they of vengeance, triumph, or sorrow."

"You're right, and I kind of think half their battle is in the noise they make. If they can't whip a man in a fair fight they try to scare him to death with their yells."

"What did you accomplish by your adventure?"

"Can't tell you yet; but I'm of opinion you will find out before many days."

"Did you see any of them in the town?"

"One—but he won't trouble us."

"You killed him then?"

"Of course I did! You see, Mr. Dickons, I thought when I left that they'd have all been camped down in your houses, so we went there, but not a live soul did we see, and I was thinking of giving it up for a bad job, when I heard one a-coming; I got the boys hid, and then made short work of him. He's got my mark, and it's my opinion some of them have seen it before this or heard of it, and you'll find they'll fight open, now. I did not exactly do as I wanted; but they are stirred up, and that's good."

Dickons continued to ask farther questions, but receiving only short replies, finally desisted. The stranger seemed to think the task he had voluntarily assumed was by no means an easy one. In not answering Dickons' questions, he evidently was planning some movement against their foe. Thus he continued, until the daughter of the former commander of the little fort happened to pass.

"Father, are you not going to recover the bodies of our poor friends that now lie at the mercy of the Indians' scalping-knife?"

"I should like to, Mary, but it might only cause others to sacrifice their lives," answered her father.

"Then I shall not insist; but it does seem wrong to let them lie unburied."

"They shall not, rest assured," said a voice that reached only her ear.

She looked around to see who had spoken, but no one was near except the stranger, who still sat with his face in his hands.

"Did you speak, sir?" she asked.

He started as one in deep thought, and looked up at her a moment.

"What, Miss?"

"I thought you spoke to me a moment ago."

"Perhaps I did," he spoke abstractedly, and then asked. "Ain't you afraid of them Indians?"

"Indeed I am; but I place my trust in God, who will in his own good time deliver us."

"You are a good girl, and I kind of think if there was only more like you in the world as men would be a heap better."

"There are very many like me."

"Well, *perhaps* there are: but they don't do to one another as they like to have people do to them always."

"I should infer from your remarks that woman has more influence over men than is generally allowed; at least, you think so?"

"I don't think 'bout it at all; I know."

"You then have seen something of the world?"

"Yes, I've been in a great many parts," he checked himself, but quickly added: "I mean round these Eastern Colonies."

"Were you ever married?"

"That's a funny question for you to ask of me! Who, think you would want to marry such an old weather-beaten hunter as I am?"

"But you were not always old! In your young days I—"

"Stop, please," he said, interrupting her. "Every man's got something or other that's better not spoke about. When I was young I was a different person from what I now am."

"I think we should sometimes confide the sorrow of our own breast to some true, sympathising friend; it would tend much in lightening the load we carry."

"God grant, Miss, you pass through but few troubles. You are a good girl—but what did you say to your father about them bones outside?"

"I wished them brought in so as we could bury them."

"And they shall be!" he said, rising as he spoke. "I'll go do it myself."

This he immediately did without being molested by the Indians, and they were interred on the outside of the block-house close to its walls.

It was a simple burial. A short prayer was offered by Dickens; a verse of some simple hymn sung, and all again repaired within the fort, none knowing how soon their time would come.

As soon as all was again quiet, Mary sought the Unknown and found him seated where she had at first conversed with him.

"As we have a little leisure now, won't you tell me some of your adventures with the Indians, for I am sure you must have met with many, and I am child-like in my eagerness to hear such tales?"

"I could tell you a story or two, Miss, and will, before I leave; but I might now, if I began, get half through, when them Indians would do some trick that would break in, and I'd have to stop."

"That is true and I will not insist. But you speak of leaving us! I hope it will not be soon. Why need you go at all? I am sure I can speak for all, when I tell you we will be glad to have you stay. Our village is small, yet before this sad affair a happy one, and we have, I believe, two houses unoccupied; one of them is next my father's. In it you can live, while I will attend as far as I can to your wants."

"A pretty, a pretty picture." he said, in that tone of voice that once before had met her ear.

"And you will make one of the group?"

"No, Miss, I can't. You wouldn't have an old hunter like me settle down in a village? I'd miss the woods, the freedom of the forest, and couldn't rest easy. No, no, Miss, let the old man have his way, and go back to his wild life."

"But do you ever think that you might sicken and die? What then would you do, without a single person to hear your last words, or give you a Christian burial?"

"The body of a man, Miss, ain't nothing but a lump of dirt, so they tell me the good Book says; and it don't make any difference to me whether I go to the dust on top or under the ground, if it warn't for the looks of the thing. The soul's the part, Miss, and it will go up to God through the green leaves of the old woods as well as through the roof of a cabin."

"You, then, are not afraid of death?"

"All men shrink more or less from its dark shadow, but I do not only a trifle. God don't judge as man, so I ain't afraid to go to his judgment-seat."

"It is not all that can talk or feel as you. But when will you go?" she asked, speaking of his departure.

"Not till them red-skins do; and if we drive them off in a day or two, I wouldn't stay any longer. We've got to keep a-moving in this world, one way or another. I've shifted some in my life, one time a-top of the hill, and next at its bottom. There's no telling the ups and downs a man will meet with, from the cradle to the grave."

At this moment, a summons came to him from Dickens. Rising, he smilingly said:

"We will have a talk again, Miss, 'bout some things I want to tell you of," and then hastened away.

"I sent for you," said Dickens, on the top of the fort, "to explain to me something that I can not account for."

"And what's that?"

"It may be a mistaken idea, but I think that growth of small bushes are *hearer* than they were this time yesterday. They now seem to be a beyond growth; yesterday they were twice that distance off. I worked on this clearing, and had ought to know correctly the position of things."

A little to the right, or farther on from the point where the Unknown had left the best of trees, in his run for the block-house that

morning grew a thick undergrowth of sprouts. They were no nearer than was the rest of the woods actually, though now they appeared but half the distance. Dickens had noticed this, and it puzzled him to explain its purport. But not so with the stranger. He gazed a moment sharply at them, seeming to calculate the distance between them and the spot where he stood.

"Mr. Dickens, you're sartain 'bout them trees?"

"I am confident," was the decided answer, now that he saw the Unknown was also excited with their appearance.

"And you can't tell what's the reason of their growing here so quick?" he looked quizzingly in his face as he spoke.

"I really can not."

"They look as if they'd grown there?"

"Certainly they do."

"But ain't you mistaken 'bout supposing they weren't there this morning?"

"Perhaps so, but I hardly think I am wrong."

"Now, Cap., if they were only within gunshot, I'd soon clear up the mystery; but I tell you what it is: the Indians have turned gardeners and *planted* them trees!"

"I must believe you, but really do not see their object."

"Just so; but you ain't the first one that's been taken in. I think sometimes that the devil himself gives them a hand at planning; but let's go below and see to matters, for we'll have enough to do this night to keep us from going to sleep."

The men were called together, and the probabilities of attack communicated to them. Some few showed signs of fear, but by far the greater part were anxious to revenge the death of their two companions, and drive their foe back again to their northern walls. Each man was carefully to inspect his arms, and if any were short of ammunition they were to supply themselves, and all be ready to act upon a moment's notice.

While these directions were being given and obeyed, the female portion were speculating on their chances of soon returning to their homes. What seemed to them singular, was the absence of the Hendrick family. Many doubts and fears were had as to their condition. Young Willet, not having returned as he had promised, it was supposed was either numbered with the dead, or else had met a fate worse than that, in being carried away captive. The picture their imagination drew from them, of torture at the stake, and of other brutal inventions of the Indians, were associated with Willet's disappearance.

"Ought we not to be thankful, 'Ies Harleman," said Mary Dickens, "that we have been so successful as to even have the shelter of this block-house afforded us, when poor Mr. Hendrick's family are, for what we know, at the mercy of our enemies?"

"You say right, Mary; and I hope we are thankful, but I cannot think Mr. Hendrick's family are in the hands of the Indians."

"It's true, the absence of Willet is surprising; but you recollect he told us that Single Eye and his Mohican friend were in the neighborhood, that Robert was sent by him to warn us of our danger, so I think it not at all unlikely, in fact more than probable, that, at this moment, they are in safety."

"I hope and pray such is the case," answered Mary, while tears glistened in her fine eyes.

"Have you not noticed something peculiar about the conduct and appearance of that stranger who so suddenly appeared in our midst?"

"I have, but did not intend speaking of it first, thinking it might only have been an idea of my own that he was other than he wished to appear."

"He has saved us so far, and, be he what he may, certainly we have no fault to find with him. But come," she added, "I will attend to the preparation of our meal, and you go learn from your father the cause of the bustle we heard from below."

Mary descended the rude stairway—ladder would, perhaps, be its proper name—and sought the side of her parent.

"Tell me, father, what the news was you told to the men a short time ago?"

"If I do, you must let it go no further."

She consented, and he narrated what had been seen from the top of the house.

"If we only had a small cannon how much it would enable us to protect ourselves, and gain the victory we are so anxious for," she said, eagerly.

"When this place was built, there was once a swivel-gun mounted on its top, but what has become of it I cannot say," he remarked.

Mary made no reply, but stood patting the ground with her foot. At length she turned and hurried away.

"I wish to speak with you, sir," she said, meeting the Unknown seated in his accustomed place.

"And so you shall, Miss. What is it?"

"I recollect, when quite a small girl, in playing about this place, that I found an old cannon, and I am sure it is here now, hid under this dirt and rubbish."

"That's the very thing I'd like to have about this time," he replied, rising. "Suppose you and I take a look for it. They say a woman's good at looking for any thing."

She smiled at the rude compliment, and the two commenced the search; but their pains were fruitless it would seem, and both were about to desist from the search when the Unknown, who had been thrusting his long knife repeatedly in the ground, struck some substance that he knew to be metal. The dirt was soon removed and there lay the gun. Upon inspection, it was found that, although the inside was somewhat worn by rust, it was still sufficiently strong for use. The men were set busy rubbing it clean, and the stranger without loss of time, was engaged in preparing cartridges.

"Guess them red-skins will kinder feel hurt, if that old gun only does its duty. Law, but won't it make them 'stonished!"

He really laughed out at the thought.

"It may cause them to abandon *this* settlement sooner than any other thing we could have employed for the purpose," Mary remarked.

"That's a fact; and when they know, too, that *I* have to handle it—tie that, please," he said, extending toward her the mouth of one of the cartridges. "Did you ever see these kind of things?"

"I never did, but you appear as if you had made them before, and have also handled a gun."

"Yes, Miss, it's not the first time by a good many."

"But we have not had a war in this part of country with the Indians, that I am aware of, in my day?"

"That's true; but sometimes for amusement we would fire off an old gun or so. But I guess that's enough. There's six words for that gun to say, and before it speaks them all, it's my opinion they will have had enough of *that* kind of language."

The men, in the mean while, had finished their task of cleaning, and the piece was ready for mounting. It was conveyed to the top of the house, and firmly secured by means of the old logs that had partially helped to hide it. It was not fixed permanently, but arranged so as to be readily moved from one place to another, as the case might require. After all was completed, the men were sent below, and only the Unknown, Dickens and Mary remained on top.

"Are those the bushes you spoke to me about?" she asked of her father, and pointing toward them.

"Yes, Mary, they are," he answered; "and you being so well acquainted with the location of this spot should know they are much nearer than they should be. In fact," he said, starting, "on my word they are nearer than they were this morning; certainly they must be within easy rifle range now."

"That's a fact, Cap.," answered their companion; "and if Miss Mary ain't afraid of handling a gun, and will run down and fetch mine, I will show you what kind of roots they've got. 'I'm getting old, though I can go well enough yet on a level; but going up and down stairs kind of tires me; you see, I ain't used to it.'"

Mary hastened to do as she was requested, and the stranger, with the assistance of Dickens, set to work loading the gun. In doing this, they were careful not to show their persons above the breast work, keeping to the lower side, where the gun was placed, and where the logs were built higher, to protect more securely the elevated part of the roof.

The Unknown, with his accustomed caution and forethought, had preferred to load with small stones, which had been gathered on the outside of the fort in sufficient quantity. Being composed of quartz, they were extremely hard and strong, much heavier than rifle-balls, and could be thrown further. Besides, ~~now~~ was only an

experiment, the Unknown preferred to use stones for a first charge, as he did not wish to lose so many balls. At last all was completed, and Mary reappearing with the rifle, he took it from her, with a word of thanks, and carefully inspected the priming.

"Now, Cap., and you, too, Miss, watch that last bush to the right. Do you see the one I mean?"

"Yes," was their answer.

"Well, I ain't going there to dig it up, but I'll stand here and show you its root with this rifle, if it does as I expect it will. Now watch!"

He blew a speck of dirt from the sight, and then resting his right elbow on one of the logs, fired.

Almost simultaneously with the report of the gun, the bush he had bidden them to watch was observed to be agitated for a moment, and then remain as before. A shudder of disappointment passed over the marksman's face at what he thought his bad aim.

"May I never shoot a rifle again if I didn't miss hitting," he said.

"I do not think so," replied Mary. "I watched closely, and am sure, by its motion, you struck it. Why did you fire at it?"

"Because, as sure as you are alive this minute, it was in the hand of an Indian."

"It in the hands of an Indian!" she repeated, with much surprise.

"Yes, Miss, and you see I didn't aim at it, but near where he was holding it up. I'll try again."

He hastily reloaded, and, resting his piece on the logs, took a long and deliberate aim, and a second time fired. The bush instantly fell, and the struggling form of one of their enemies was distinctly seen for a moment, then dragged from sight by some companion.

"Did you see the root that time?" he asked.

Father and daughter were too much excited to speak, but continued gazing at the apparently natural view of trees.

"It's a fact, Cap., and you might as well believe it first as last. You won't find any other roots to them trees than red-skins."

"Man, whoever you are, whether good or bad, it makes no difference; you have been sent by a good God to watch over us and our lives. Had it not been for you, although to me it would have seemed queer, yet that seeming natural row of bushes would have been taken for real, and, by our not knowing who was lurking behind them would have enabled the Indians to have made so sudden an attack that, to my mind, their success would have been sure. At least, I thank you; it is all I can do at present."

Mary joined her father in thanking the stranger for his watchful care over their lives; but he seemed not to like their protestations. He awkwardly nodded his head in reply, and abruptly turning, commenced walking to and fro on the narrow solitary way.

It was to be noticed that, although not a breath of air stirred the forest trees on either side, the cluster of bushes seemed to be mightily

agitated as if by a light wind; their leaves kept a constant trembling, and, to the eye of a close observer, they could be seen advancing slowly and steadily toward the little fort.

The purpose the Indians had in view, in adopting this mode of concealment, was, evidently, to gain as near a position as possible before the night set in, when it was their intention to make a general attack. It would be supposed that, by the report of the Unknown's rifle, they would have known that the whites had discovered their hiding-place, and so they did; but they hoped that, by retaining their position, even after the loss of one of their number, their intended victims would remain in ignorance as to the number of their enemy. Besides, nothing was to be gained by throwing down their screens and repairing to the woods, as the same ground on the coming night would have to be passed over again. They then concluded that, as their artificial thicket was a sufficient concealment, and that it would be only a chance shot that would take effect, to remain where they were, and let the whites waste their fire on them.

Dickons was very anxious to have the cannon discharged, but the Unknown would not listen to it. He did not wish the whites informed of the fact that they had one; and, as a rifle-ball would now do execution, the stranger prepared to use his single shot.

For some time after the last discharge of his gun, the Unknown continued his silent walk. Dickons, in the meanwhile, retired below, but Mary, evidently with a woman's curiosity to learn more of their friend remained.

"Were you ever in this neighborhood before?" she asked.

He started at the sound of her voice, and his face settled back to its old expression as he answered:

"No, Miss. Never right about here; I've been off to the westward of these parts some."

"How came you so providentially to our aid?"

"You see, there's something queer in that; and the closer I think about it, the more it puzzles me. I'd made up my mind to take a run down to see you, but not till next spring. This being settled, I went to work fixing my cave—"

"Your cave, do you live in a cave?" interrupted Mary, seeming to be much astonished.

"Yes, Miss, that's my home, and I wouldn't change with no one for a log-house. I've been out there for some considerable time. But somehow I can't get it out of my head that I ought to be down here this fall. I'd ax myself what for? and I got none the answer, 'Case you're wanted;' so at last I packed up and started, and I tell you what it is, I'd a job to get here. I'd been out about three days, when first thing I knew, I ran smack into a host of the reds, with King Philip at their head! I managed to keep from letting them see me, and I kept on till I got about six miles from this place, when into another lot of them I gets. I came pretty near walking into their house without knocking, but dodged round till I missed them, and

then came on. I knew why I was wanted when I saw the fix you were in—”

“You had two narrow escapes then in reaching us, it would seem?”

“I can’t say they were much of an escape, kase I’ve been in so many in my day that these appeared to be nothing.”

“I have been wondering this morning why they have not set fire to our village; can you tell me the reason?”

“I think I can, for you see they ain’t had much time to spare kase we’ve bothered them some; besides, they’ve got a notion them houses are pretty good to camp in, so they’ll try first to kill us, and then burn down the village.”

“You do not think they will prove at all successful in an attack, do you?”

“Can’t say ’bout that. We’ve got to fight our best and not show ourselves outside till the time comes.”

“I would much sooner the struggle commenced, for this suspense is worse than the thing itself. How many of them do you think there is about us?”

“Perhaps as many as one hundred and fifty or more, can’t say exactly, but there’s a big lot. Take a look, Miss, at them bushes; they’re growing uncommon fast this way!”

Mary looked as requested, and was astonished to see how near they now appeared. Even since the unknown had last fired, the distance had been much diminished.

“Will you not open a fire on them if they continue advancing so rapidly?” she asked.

“They ain’t going to come much further; and what I want is to let them begin the fight. There’s no use our waiting much longer, kase it’s got to come one time or another. Now you see, Miss, if we should fire on them, they’d take to the woods again, and dodge round two or three days before they’d thought of some other plan. So it’s best to pretend we hadn’t seen the Indian my ball knocked over, and let them come. Perhaps by to-morrow morning we’ll have whipped them so as they won’t care to try it again. What I want is, to see you safe and sound in your own home, and then I’ll bid you good-by, and a God bless you,” he drew his hand rapidly across his eyes as he spoke, and his voice slightly trembled.

“I would repeat my wishes to have you stay with us, but feel it would be useless. You would not accept.”

“You’re right, Miss, I wouldn’t; and when I part from you, I guess it will be forever. I’d like to ask of you a favor before I go.”

“What is it?” “Nothing that I can consistently do shall be denied.”

“You’re a Christian, ain’t you?”

“I try to be.”

“Well, I guess you are, and the favor is this: When you pray to God to bless you and your friends, think of the night you opened

the gate of this block-house to admit me, and pray, young lady, pray to the Eternal Triune God, that the gate of heaven may be opened to admit the soul of—"

He stopped. The nasal twang of the hunter was gone, and in its place came the full rounded cadence of the scholar. His face was lit up, and his commanding figure was drawn to its full height. His lips still remained parted, to give utterance to his name, when he checked himself, and fixing on Mary his cold, stern eye, he added:

"You judge by my actions, and the language I but this moment used, that I am other than my dress indicates, but you are wrong. I *once* was, but am not now. Oh, world! ambition, love, hate! what a chaos you have made of me! A wreck of one of God's great masterpieces! Mary, if I have rendered you any assistance, or those in this place, do you manifest it by not mentioning to a living soul what I have been so foolish as to let you discover; and before we part, I will confide to you the secret of my life, and who I am. You promise me?"

"I do, sir."

He smiled his thanks, and then assuming his original tone and manner, said:

"We'll go down, Miss, if you like, for there's matters that want tending to before night comes."

She followed after him without remark, and on the first landing they silently parted.

It was not to be wondered at that questions should have been asked among the men as to who the Unknown was, and where he had come from. Still, not for one moment with any of them was it supposed he was any thing else save as his garments indicated, a hunter and Indian fighter.

"You may say what you like, but one thing's sure, and that is, if it hadn't been for that man that some of you think ain't quite right in his top story, we all would have been feeling warm and the women carried away," said a man called Harris, who, while speaking, was busy running balls.

"Them's my sentiments and feelings too, Harris; and which of us would have thought of the tricks and sence he has? But I don't think there's a person here but is thankful to him; I am, and if I was down home, I'd give him a good time for one night."

No time was given to reply, for the subject of their conversation stood in their midst. He informed them, in few words, what they might that night have to do. A plan did he reveal the men of the character of their foe, and what would be expected of them from their hands. He urged them to be conversely watchful, and that they attempt to effect an entrance, but that it was to be done secretly, should be in some other part of the building, and on no account was a light for one moment to be allowed to burn. All was to be done in darkness and silence.

As frequently as the men had listened to his instructions, never be-

fore had they been spoken with as much emphasis as now. Al. felt that the time was near at hand, when, either they would have to take their last look on earth, or else drive from their hitherto happy homes the revengeful enemy that now sought their destruction.

Moment after moment passed, and the dusky shades of night settled around. Not a word was spoken; the unbroken silence seemed like the forerunner of some great disaster.

"Won't some one say something, for this stillness is to me awful," exclaimed one of the men, speaking in a low voice.

He received no answer from his companions, but gazing round upon them, was again about to speak, when the low, rumbling voice of distant thunder met their ear. Every head was raised, every eye scanned the face of his fellow.

"Thunder!" was the single expression of Harris.

"Yes," was as briefly answered.

"And it's the very thing will please them Indians if it comes this way. I tell you, neighbors, it's going to be dark fighting them, and we will have to keep a sharp look-out; if we don't, first thing we know they'll be right inside with us, and then look out for your top knots."

"How can you speak so lightly of our situation, Harris? It certainly was bad enough before the storm threatened us; but now, with the war of the elements above us, and our savage foe around, it is enough to shake the stoutest heart."

"I don't think I was making light of our fix. Didn't I say we would have to keep a bright look-out, or the reds would look in? But what's the use of making a fuss of what can't be helped? All we've got to do is fight our best when they make the attack."

While their situation was being made the subject of conversation by the men, the stranger, with Dickons, had again ascended to the top. Their gaze was centered on the bushes, that had remained in the same position as when first seen by them, yet there was an unusual rustling and trembling, and the occasional quick, upright jerk of some branch that had become displaced.

"We may expect a bad night, by the appearance of that bank of come clouds in the north-west," at last remarked Dickons.

"Bad enough for us, but the very best for them red varmin's. It's my opinion they're in fine spirits about it, but it may cost some of them their lives afore morning, if they ain't careful how they about this pile of logs."

"Your cannon will be of little or no use in the darkness."

"It's going to say one word, anyhow, before they get quite ready for fight."

"You have it loaded, then?"

"Don't you know?"

"I had almost forgotten the fact."

"Now, look here: I want you to keep a clear head, if nobody else don't, this night, for it's going to be hard work for me to be in

every place at once, and I want you to help manage the men; but if you forget whether it's loaded or no, when you helped do it, why you might as well lay down and keep out the way, for all the good you'll do!"

"I now remember distinctly about it, and I assure you, that the service you may require of me shall be performed without fear or hesitancy."

"It don't make so much matter 'bout it, anyhow, only keep wile awake till we whip them varmints, and then you can do as you like. I'm a blunt man, and speak as I think; it's my way. So don't think hard of it, if I did snap you up kinder sharp."

Dickons made no reply, and his companion, looking at him a moment, turned and once more fixed his eye on the bushes, which now could be but dimly seen.

The storm was slowly approaching, giving utterance to its power by its mutterings, while, now and then, the forked lightning would dart across the heavens. Night at last set in, with a darkness that seemed dense. No rain had fallen, but the wind came in quick, angry puffs, herabbling the carnival to come. The Unknown retained his position, and when the scene would be, for the moment, illumined with midday brightness, his eyes could be seen fixed on the row of bushes.

It was during one of these flashes of light, that Dickons, who had returned from a visit below, noticed him spring quickly to his feet, grasp the cannon, and wait for the next to show him how to direct his aim. Soon all things again were brought out in vivid distinctness by the unearthly light, and quickly the piece was pointed toward the bushes, that now had contracted into a heavy cluster.

The Unknown stepped back a few paces, and, placing his rifle so as its mouth came over the priming of the cannon, fired. The report which followed shook the old house to its base. Throwing himself far forward on the logs, he seemed trying to penetrate the darkness.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CAVE'S EXPERIENCE OF A NIGHT

But what of the Hendrick family?

Through the carelessness of one of the sons, the large vessel that contained their supply of water had been overturned, spilling every drop. The question now was, what should be done. To remain there and to wait until the return of Single Eye, and have him obtain a supply, was not to be thought of, as it was so uncertain when he

would be back; besides, the heat of the place in the day time made it necessary, not only for their comfort, but for their very existence, that water should be constantly on hand.

The impulse of the son was to descend immediately and bring up a supply. To this his father would not listen, as all depended on their leaving no trail to guide the savages to their hiding-place, and he well knew that, did his boys attempt such a thing without the guidance of Single Eye, "signs" sufficient would be left to enable the Indians to find them.

The following plan was, at last, thought of and adopted, though, as the sequel will prove, it came very near effecting the very object all were endeavoring to avoid. The rope that had been used in bringing the articles from the bed of the stream to the mouth of the cave was fastened to the handle of a small pail, which was let down into the water below. A short time sufficed to convey an abundance of what was so much needed. Supposing they had accomplished it without being seen, they felt once more secure.

The plan in itself was good, but the selection of the time to put it into operation was not thought of. Instead of suffering thirst, and waiting for night to conceal their movements, they made use of the first peep of day for their experiment.

Resting on the opposite bank, were two Indian scouts that had halted there about an hour before day. Although in so near proximity to the cave, its entrance was completely hidden by the overhanging cliff, together with a luxuriant growth of wild vine, and, unless they had been shown it by the operations of the inmates in obtaining water, even the busk eye of the Indian would never have suspected its existence, much less have sought for it. One of them lay stretched in sleep on the short grass, and the other, as is their custom when on the war-path, reclined against the trunk of a tree. The slight noise the bucket made in catching the water was not at first noticed, but, on the sound being so oft repeated, the standing Indian at last heard it. Looking up, he discovered the pail as for the last time it was ascending. Carefully raising his gun, he seemed on the point of firing, when on second thought he lowered it, and nodding, as if pleased with some better idea, awoke his companion, and communicated what he had observed. They both seemed in high glee, and, slowly rising to their feet, moved at once cautiously away, and were soon lost to view in the dense mazes of the forest.

"Thank God," exclaimed Mr. Hendrick, as his son entered the cave for the last time that day, "that we are once more supplied."

"Amen to that; and I do not think Single Eye could have done better than we have," was the answer.

"You are quite sure no lurking savage observed you? The woods are full of them. I know from the sounds that have reached us."

"I have no fears about that," was the confident reply.

"But I have," said Lucy, breaking in on the conversation and speaking with marked emphasis.

"You have, daughter—and what are they?"

"I cannot tell you *why* I have such fears, because I do not know how to account for them myself; but I certainly feel that the coming night will bring the confirmation of my words," she replied.

"Nonsense, sister; how foolish you are to think so," answered her brother.

"*Perhaps!*"

"Why, *who* could have seen me?"

"An Indian could, very readily."

"But I was extremely careful to notice whether any were in sight."

"Can you see through the body of a tree, or very far in the thick foliage of yonder wood, on the other side of the brook?"

"I admit I cannot see very far; still, I would be willing to stake my life I was not noticed."

"You would lose."

"Why?"

"I have said I cannot give you any reason; yet, I am confident in what I think, and mark, you will find before to-morrow morning I am correct."

Her brothers made light of what was said, but not so the father; he had great confidence in woman's sagacity, while the determined manner in which she expressed herself awoke in his breast a feeling of uneasiness which he could not allay. He determined to watch that night himself.

The day passed on with the same monotonous routine that had marked its predecessors. The boys would employ themselves in cleaning their rifles, or engage in some simple game, or else surmise what they thought was passing around them, and try to guess the condition of their friends in the black-house.

"I do most certainly begin to feel like a fish out of water. I tell you what it is, William, this sitting cooped up here in this air is making me begin to feel rusty for want of exercise. I am almost tempted to leave you, and try to reach the village."

"I do not doubt but you find it hard to exist, with your heart in one place and your body in another; but I would advise you to wait before you attempt to repair them, till you can go without the fear of having your beauty spoiled by losing some of the hair on top of your head."

"You're made of a fanny mixture of human matter. I do not for the life of me see what you mean," said John laughing.

"And it's because you do not wish to. Shall I ask you a question?"

"Certainly."

"But the thing is, will you answer it?"

"If it is worth my time and breath, I will."

"You're in love, and the lady's name is Mary McKee? And I'm right, John?"

This was rather more than the young man had bargained for. He muttered something unadvisedly, and turned away.

Lucy, at the request of her father, had prepared the evening meal somewhat sooner than usual. This little act seemed to tell her that, though her brothers had little heeded her warning, and her father seemed of like mind, still he intended to be doubly watchful. She spoke no further on the subject, and save a few commonplace remarks, it was not directly alluded to by them.

It had been the custom, since the cave had become their hiding-place, to keep a small fire burning, both from the double purpose of affording a little light, and to dry, in a measure, the damp atmosphere. This night it was covered thickly over with ashes, so that not even a spark could be seen.

"John!"

"Well, sir?" answered the young man, going to where his father was standing, near the entrance.

"I intend to remain on the watch with you to-night. It is your turn, I believe, is it not?"

"It is, sir; William was up last night."

"Did you hear all your sister said to-day?"

"Most all of it; but why do you ask?"

"Because I believe our hiding-place has been discovered."

"By our drawing up water?"

"Yes."

"But, we made no noise, and the vines hid us from sight."

"Still, I believe as Lucy does."

"You do! why, I can not see—"

"Stop," interrupted his father, "I have an older head than you, and I assure you there is more truth in what she said than I really would wish to believe. I now warn you to be watchful."

"I shall be; never fear."

After a moment's silence his father again asked:

"Where is the ax we brought?"

"In the farther end of the cave; shall I get it?"

"Yes, and remember I will act first if we are called on. You are not to interfere unless I ask you, or you see I am overpowered. Stop on your way," he added, as his son rose to do as he was requested, "and tell your brothers not to stir should they hear any noise, unless it comes from the small opening in the roof; then I must be notified."

The arrangements having been all completed, the two seated themselves in silence to await events to come. It might have been a little after midnight, when Mr. Hendrick, who had not thought of sleep, was suddenly aware of the slight movement of something at the entrance of the cave. He listened attentively. The sound was a slight rubbing noise, and, though positive that no one was yet on the ledge, still he felt assured the noise was made by some human agency. This suspense was torture. He determined to find its cause. Carefully and with no noise, he settled himself on his hands and knees, and commenced making his way over the rough bottom toward

the entrance. On reaching it, he gazed out, but could discern nothing. It was a clear, starlight night, so that, had an Indian been ascending, he would have been seen. The noise that had aroused him had ceased, and he was on the point of laying it to his excited imagination, when he felt something slightly strike his head. Instantly looking up, he saw what proved to be a small knotted rope of deer skin. It was lowered three or four inches, and then remained motionless. Again this was repeated, and again, until its end reached the platform. Here it was lifted up and let down repeatedly, till those above seemed convinced that it rested on the ledge. Soon, from its vibrating motion, Hendrick knew it was being made fast above.

Prudence now dictated to him the necessity of returning within, which he carefully did, and communicated to his son in a hurried whisper what he had discovered.

Moment after moment passed, yet no further noise was heard. The silence of the place was unbroken except by the audible beating of their hearts. Mr. Hendrick was on the point of believing that he had been seen from above, when the figure of an Indian's head and shoulders rose slowly to view at the entrance for a moment, then it was withdrawn quickly with caution.

"Did you see that?" whisperingly inquired Mr. Hendrick.

"I did," answered his son.

"Remember my instruction."

He now arose to his feet, and taking the ax in his hand, placed himself on one side of the entrance. Scarcely had he taken his position, when the Wampanoag again made his appearance. Earnestly gazing within the cave, he slowly began to enter. He was allowed to do so, until in Hendrick's judgment he was within striking distance. Softly raising the ax, and with the full muscular power of his strong arm, the settler drove its edge deep into the neck of the savage, nearly severing the head and body. Death was instantaneous. The body swayed to and fro a moment, and then with a slight rattling sound fell forward almost on the young man, who, obedient to his instructions, had not quitted his seat.

"Think God!" exclaimed the father, in a low tone, "he is disposed of; but his companions, unless some signal has been arranged to tell whether he is successful or not, will soon follow."

As if in answer to this remark, the rattling sound that had at first attracted his attention was again heard, and, upon going to the entrance, he found the rope was being slightly shaken from above a moment, then again hung still. Taking notice of it, though he could not tell why he did so, Hendrick returned what he supposed to be the signal. Scarcely had he done so, when he was surprised by the rattling sound that another of the Indian's companions was descending. He immediately regained his position, and waited the second arrival; nor had he long to wait, for the savage came to the mouth of the cave, and advanced some steps fearlessly in. Something

seemed to excite his suspicions, for he stopped, and muttered in his own language some words, then turned as if about to leave, when the fatal ax again descended, and his spirit sped after his companion.

Long and anxiously did father and son wait for farther indications of the Indians, but nothing more was heard. Morning at last broke in all its splendor on that scene of blood. It was truly a frightful picture for the eyes of Lucy to gaze on. There lay the ghastly corpses of the two Indians, hideous enough in their war-paint alone, but now doubly so, as they lay with their dull, leaden, sightless eyes, and gaping wounds, weltering in their blood. The question that now arose in the minds of all, and a very important one, was, the disposition of the bodies. Their late narrow escape convinced them how important it was not to expose themselves to the view of lurking savages. It was finally decided to wait the arrival of Simpson, unless the bodies became offensive, then they were to be dropped into the stream, and the risk run of their hiding-place being discovered by their prowling foe.

CHAPTER X.

THE RELIEF PARTY.

SINGLE EYE, Robert and Asa pressed forward until they reached Mr. Hendrick's house, without detecting any signs of their enemies. Here they stopped, and as the previous night had been spent without sleep, they repaired, on the suggestion of Simpson, to the barn. Climbing to the loft without hesitancy, they resigned themselves to slumber.

It was quite dark when they woke, and the hunter blamed himself for allowing so much time for rest. They descended and immediately took a direct line for the cave, none more anxious to reach it than Robert.

"Gosh, boy, it's going to rain some to-night, by the looks of them clouds yonder, and besides, it's my 'pinion the red serpents ain't going to let a night like this go by, without letting the folks in the black-house hear from them. I have got a big mind to take a walk over there after we've been to the cave. What do you say 'bout that?" he asked of the Mohican.

"Me go quick—get more scalp soon!"

"Wal, Inan, if 'trent all you think 'bout, getting them nasty scalps: but, as it's your way, I 'spose it's all right."

"Do you think you will go?" inquired Robert.

"I'll tell you better after we get to the cave. But, think I will

though," he added, looking back at the approaching storm. "Kase, don't like to get my duds wet when it ain't no use; but if Assa makes up his mind to go, go he will, and I'll follow just to keep the critter from being foolish, for I do believe he'd do over again what he did when the sarpents pounced on him."

By the time they arrived it was quite late. The signal made had to be repeated several times before it was answered. At length they reached the entrance. Single Eye, who was in advance, noticed instantly the dead bodies, which the boys had drawn from where they had been deposited, for the purpose of throwing them down into the water, taking advantage of the darkness that promised effectually to conceal their movements from the eye of any lurking foe.

"When did you come across these rels?" he inquired, with much surprise.

"They attempted to make us a visit, but, thank God, they did not succeed in their purpose," replied Mr. Hendrick.

The entire account of how the Indians had been shown their hiding-place, the warning of Lucy, and finally their successful defeat, was told the hunter, who, in return, narrated all that had befallen them since they parted, dwelling long on the usefulness of his "powers."

"Wal, boy, let's get them bodies out of here, kase it's my 'pinion they don't smell quite as sweet as they might if they were alive and kicking, and had been accidentally washed."

They turned to do so, when Assa stepped close to Single Eye, and gazed a moment in his face. The latter nodded, and the Indian removed their scalps, unnoticed by all except the hunter. They were then dragged to the ledge and thrown over.

"Simpson," inquired Mr. Hendrick, as he returned to the inside, "when do you think an attack will be made on the block-house? The Indians must by this time be well aware that an attempt to starve them out is useless."

"I don't think, squire, they mean to starve them out at all. The boy and me was saying a few words 'bout that coming along, and I think they'll try their hand at that ar' place to-night."

He had scarcely finished speaking, when the low report of the cannon the Unknown had fired broke on their ears in vibrating echoes, making it resemble the distant thunder that anon spoke in its stern, deep voice.

"Did you hear that?" exclaimed Single Eye.

"Was it thunder?" asked Robert.

"No lad, I guess it warn't. It sounded like a cannon, but they ain't got one, have they?"

"I do not think they have; at least, I was not aware there was one in the block-house."

"But that noise never came from any thing else, that's certain."

"Would not a number of rifles cease that sound at this distance, if fired together?"

"Not they; that's too solid like for any thing else than what I said it was. Watch that Mohigan!"

All eyes were turned on Assa, who stood at the mouth of the cave, his figure clearly defined by the faint light of the fire. Something unusual seemed to excite him. His eye was fixed on some object that the rest could not observe, and it appeared a hard matter for him to control his feelings.

"Single Eye," he said, addressing his white friend in the Indian tongue, "come, see here!"

The hunter repaired to his side, and following the direction of the Indian's finger, saw the light of a fire burning at about a mile from them, and toward the direction of the block-house. While he still gazed, the rapid report of rifles met his ear accompanied by the faint yells of the Indians.

"I tell you what it is, men," exclaimed the hunter manifesting more excitement than the party had ever before seen in him; "Pete Sampson ain't the man that's going to stay here when they're having such a big fight at the settlements. There's enough of you to take care of this cave, so Assa and I'll take a run over there and give them a hand."

"Single Eye, you must not go!" exclaimed Lucy.

"Why?" he asked, turning quickly toward her, while one of those gleams of savage ferocity, which Robert had once before noticed shot across his features.

"Because it is your duty to protect us."

"And have all of them down there scalped?"

"They have larger number of friends around them than we."

"And larger numbers of enemies outside than we. It ain't my nature to see any friend of mine want a helping hand when I've got one to lend him. It ain't 'corring to my nature, and it ain't 'corring to the wish of the Great Spirit, which you have told me he teaches 'bout in his Good Book. I'll tell you what it is, that if I thought you were in danger here, I'd stay by you; but I know you ain't, and so I'm going down to the block-house whether or no, and that right off."

Single Eye partook so much of the nature of the red man, that it was a rare occurrence for him to speak at any great length, more especially when his mind was made up to accomplish any undertaking. His voice and manner were quick and nervous, as if he could scarce spare the time to give utterance to the few words he had spoken. As he ceased he turned and walked toward the ledge, fastening his rifle to his back as he proceeded. Robert checked him as he reached the opening by asking:

"Would you like any of us to go with you?"

"I'd like to take the lot on you men folks, but that wouldn't do, kase the gal would be left alone."

"How many would it require for safety to remain with her?" inquired Hendrick.

"Wal, squire, you see them varmints ain't going to bother you to-night, kase they've got their hands full at tother place; and see-

and kase they don't know you're here; so all it wants to stay here is just enough for company sake. You and she can tell between you how many they'll take. I tell you boys," turning to the young men, "if we six were to open fire on them in the rear, and be quick they'd think a hull army was come, sure."

"Single Eye make squaw—talk too much for big warrior," said the impatient Indian, who but partially understood their conversation. "Let Injun go; if don't go soon Mohigan get no scalp."

"You critter, if you don't have a chance to get all the ha'r yo want, I'll give you mine," replied Single Eye.

"Injun no take scalp from friend; but it don't go soon an' Injun—fight, kill, drive Injun 'way, den make war-path long; dat's all, but dat *good* for me—*good*."

Mr. Hendrick at once perceived the truth of the Indian's hint, and hastily replied:

"As you think, Single Eye, that but one remaining with Lucy will be enough, the boys can go and I will stay; but, promise me you will return in the morning."

His sons were eager with the idea of going. Giving the required promise, they soon were ready. Lucy made many objections, but disregarding them they started, and soon reached the opposite side of the stream.

"Now, boys," exclaimed the hunter, who seemed in high glee, "all you've got to do is to mind me, and we'll come out all right. Be-loonk! won't them critters open their ears, and eyes too, when they hear us a-keeping the time with our rides? Wal, Assa, you're bound for that fire, eh?"

"Yes, me go. Few Injuns dere; all rest down at fort—dat good for us! Leave big trail, don't care; Injun no find trail any more."

"You think, then, Mohigan, that they'll get whipped to-night?"

"Don't know *sure*; t'ink so. Sun rise bright in morning, t'ink so, but all covered wid cloud. Great Spirit only know dat, kase he made it."

The Mohigan, by his society with the whites, had learned to believe in a great many things as they did, although the Indian's mode of thought was somewhat different. As he uttered the last word, he gave utterance to a short, significant grunt, which implied that no further conversation was to be held, and taking the lead he walked as quickly as the darkness would admit, causing the young men much trouble to keep near him. Pete was often obliged to check him, to enable them to come up. Thus they continued, till the first light could be seen glimmering through the trees. They then halted, and Pete started forward to learn how many of their enemy were gathered around it. This was invariably his custom. The Mohigan seemed afraid to trust his impulsive nature, fearful that the natural hate he inherited would cause him to attack his foe on the moment, without waiting for the support of his friends. The hunter was absent a short time, and before the young men had hardly

thought him gone, he rose to his feet among them, and communicated what he had seen.

The party at the fire consisted of three Indians, of which number, one, apparently, was badly wounded, and lay in a couch of hemlock boughs, while the others seemed entirely lost to all around, so intent were they in listening to the sounds of the distant battle.

Robert, in unison with the rest of the young men, was decidedly opposed to shedding their unconscious enemies' blood; but the hunter and Mohican would not listen to the idea. Their death was necessary to their safety; and besides, the conclusive argument was advanced by Pete, as to whether the Indians would hesitate in killing *them*, did they hold the same advantage as the whites. The young men saw the matter was decided on, and raised no further objections.

Slowly they approached the unsuspecting savages, and when within rifle range, the hunter and Indian each selected his man, and fired. Their foes, without a sound, settled back on the ground, dead. The wounded man sprung to his feet, and feebly endeavored to make his escape, but Assa was quickly by his side, and led him back to the fire, which he stirred into a bright, steady glare. Single Eye at once saw what the intentions of his Indian friend were, and had they plenty of time, would have patiently waited until the Mohican's temper was gratified; but now, now, every moment was of the greatest importance, consequently he raised an objection. The Indian paid no attention to what he said, but turning toward the captive, said, in a language he knew would be understood, and which we will translate fully into English, preserving as much of the original idiom as the change will permit:

"Brother," commenced the Mohican, placing himself directly in front of the captive, "I am about to speak to you a short time. A wise warrior never shuts his ears to the voice of his enemy, and when that enemy belongs to the great and wise tribe of the Mohican, he may learn something it will be good for him to know. Brother, we are both Indians; both the children of the red-man's God, and yet we are enemies. We both hunt on the same ground, both fish from the same streams, both sleep in the same woods, and both hunt and kill each other. I shall kill you. I have come here with these pale-faces to hunt you, and I have got you, and soon will have your scalp. I hope you are ready to let me have it." So humble was his tone, and his voice so weak, that Robert, with his companions, would have supposed he was a sick man, instead of enemy about to murder his prisoner. What would have been the result if he had continued when the Mohican had thus said? "Brother," he continued, "you are, perhaps, a good warrior, a brave man, but I do not know you, but you are wounded, and a coward goes not where he can receive a wound. I am sorry, brother, I cannot test your bravery by torturing you after our fashion. Brother, the time draws close when I must send you after your friends. They may wait for you to overtake them and to it would give them trouble, and they may not

wait, which would make you run to overtake them, and that would give you trouble. You shall not wait long before you start for the hunting-grounds of the great Manitou. Now, brother, I must tell you who I am." As he uttered these words, his voice and manner changed like magic. No longer did he speak in softly-uttered speech. His voice rang out stern and defiant, while his figure was drawn to its utmost height. "I am Assawamsutt the Mohican, the warrior before whom your young men fall like leaves in autumn. My wigwam is hung with the scalps of your braves, and I have here some more to add to them. This place is for yours, brother." He drew his blanket one side, and exhibited to his captive the seven scalps which hung at his belt. "Does not my brother think I am a brave now, and that it is great to die by my hand? I once lived with your people; I took a squaw from your people. I eat, smoked, hunted with them, thought with them, till they dug up the hatchet, and painted for the war-path against the pale-faces. Then I said, I can not fight as they fight, I can not kill as they will kill. The Mohican never strikes the hand that he has taken in friendship. I parted with my squaw, and built my wigwam where the grass was soft and green, and the waters bright and clear. I did not dig up the tomahawk against my red brother then. Brother, your young men came and stole my squaw, burnt my wigwam, and killed my brother. Then my heart was big, my knife was sharp, and I painted for the war-path. Brother, I am nearly done, and am sorry I have kept you so long. I have killed many of your warriors, and shall kill more. I shall now kill you. Brother, good-by."

Robert had listened attentively to every word that had been uttered, and more than once was on the point of releasing the prisoner, but the stern glance of Single Eye held him back. Not a muscle of the captive's face changed, and as Assawamsutt bade him "good-by," he noticed the Indian slowly bend his head to receive the stroke. He saw the upraised tomahawk glance in the bright fire-light, and turned away his head to hide the tragical sight; but he could not shut his ears to the dull, hollow, crushing sound, or to the heavy fall; and turning, he saw the Mohican rise slowly from the body, holding in his hand the bleeding scalp-lock. It required but a moment for the Indian to reload his gun, and without uttering a word, the party moved on.

The firing had, in the mean while, ceased, with the exception of now and then an occasional shot. Single Eye inferred from the fact that the Indians had received a warm reception, and also that they might chance to fall in with some straggler or out-land of the main body, proceeded with greater caution, stopping now and then to listen.

"There's one thing that's puzzling my brain," at length spoke the hunter.

"What is that?" inquired Robert.

"Why, 'bout that cannon."

"You have been in that block-house?"

"Wal I guess I have, a *few* times."

"And did never notice one?"

"No, boy, and you see that's what puzzles me, kase I never knew one built without a swivel-gun stuck somewhere 'bout. You don't know 'bout one being there?"

"I do not, and yet it does occur to me, that Dickons mentioned, one day, that one was furnished when the house was built."

"Then you can make up your mind they've found it some where else, as sure as shootin', that was it we heard. But, that ain't all that bothers me."

"And pray, what else is it you can not make out?"

Robert smiled as he spoke, for it was a rare occurrence that could happen without the hunter's seeing into its causes.

"Wal, boy, it's this, and it's as sure as you are here, that there's somebody else in that fort 'cept Dickons—I mean some up and down Indian fighter's got charge of things."

"Do you think so? Is Dickons not able to give directions?"

"Suren he is, in *his* way; but we'd have heard more noise from there, if it hadn't been that them varmints had to play shy. You just mind what I say, and see if it ain't so. Do you think he'd thought 'bout that gun himself, if he had not been put up to it?"

"I can not say. I placed great dependence on him when I gave the management of things into his keeping."

"We'll find out all 'bout it when we get there," replied Single Eye, and judging from the manner in which he uttered the remark, Robert inferred that he wished to say no more.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NIGHT STRUGGLE.

THE flash of lightning showed the Unknown the havoc which the discharge of the piece had made. It was more a chance shot than one on which much certainty of aim could be depended, owing to the extreme darkness of the night; yet, from the number of prostrate forms which the momentary light exposed, he was convinced it had slain a number of the enemy. This brought the rest into immediate action. With horrid yells, they discharged their guns, in quick succession, at the fort. All was activity now within its walls. The women, for the most part, would have willingly rendered all the assistance in their power, but the Unknown sternly bade them to remain where they were. Accordingly, they huddled together in a corner, to remain silent and unobtrusive throughout the night.

Dickon from the lessons and example of the stranger became a once efficient and self-composed. He quickly moved from place to place, impressing on the men the duty of obeying implicitly the orders of their superior.

Thus continued the fight. Neither party was able to take any thing like a correct aim. Those within the walls discharged their guns only as the lightning would momentarily expose their foe. The savages kept up a steady firing. A few balls pierced the joints of the house, badly wounding some of the inmates. The Unalut was informed of this, and instructed the men to change their position after firing, that the Indians might be baffled in directing their aim at points where they had seen the flash of the guns. The heavens, meanwhile, became entirely overspread by heavy, sudden clouds. The wind came in quick, steady puffs, and then would, for a moment, fall again, to almost a complete calm. From the north could be heard that low, sobbing sound, the forerunner of a heavy storm. The sound is frequently heard at sea, though very seldom noticed on land, and the seamen have named it "the weep of the weather." The Indians had somewhat relaxed their firing, as if to await its outburst for their general attack. When the block-house was constructed, a strong and sufficient palisade surrounded it, but time had destroyed this. Only here and there a post remained standing, and so hurriedly had the settlers been compelled to seek the fort's shelter, that no time was allowed to repair it, much less to replace its outer wall of wood.

It has been mentioned that many of the logs were in a partial state of decay. An opening might be effected from the outside easily, and without much noise being made to attract the attention of the inmates. At the part of the building where Harris was stationed, the logs had undergone more decay than at any other point, owing to a depression of the ground, which collected the moisture from three sides to that one spot.

There was not a man in that little company who possessed more hardihood and reckless bravery than he, and it was well for the entire safety of those within, and the comfort of those without, that he was placed at that particular spot. During the commencement of the attack, his rifle had been heard the most frequent of any, and it had spoken to such purpose. He was so confident of his own skill, of late, that not a sound came from his corner, and believed some stray ball had found his foe; but they were mistaken. He had noticed the slight noise, made by some one or more of their enemy, in removing the rotten wood on the outside, and had not dared to listen, and to mark their progress. He had been thus occupied for some time, when, from the pieces of wood that fell on his hand, he knew they had succeeded in making a hole through, and concluded it time to communicate the fact to his commander. Feeling around with his foot he encountered the leg of a companion, which he sharply kicked:

"Say, whoever you are, stoop down; I've got something I want to whisper to you!"

"Is that you, Harris?"

"Yes."

"We thought you dead!"

"No matter what you thought—stoop down."

"Well, here I am. What is it?"

"Go find the stranger, as quick as you can, and tell him that I want him to come here, and listen to a bumblebee that's been boring for over an hour back."

"A bumblebee! What do you mean?"

"You fool you. Don't you know I don't mean exactly what I say? If you can't understand me, I'll tell you in plain English. There's an Injun made a hole through these logs, and 'fore long will be for coming in to see us. Now go, and mind, don't tell any one but the Captain."

His companion rose and commenced the search, uttering, now and then, as he proceeded in the pitchy darkness, and in a whisper, the words, "Say, Captain, where are you?"

"Well, man, say it," uttered a voice at length, which he recognized as belonging to the Unknown.

"Harris wants you to come over to his corner as soon as you can. He says there's some one boring in the logs, and they've been at work over an hour."

"There is, is there? Well, show me where his corner is."

The two groped their way back, and the Unknown telling the man to return to his station, settled himself by the side of Harris.

"What's this you've got down here?" he inquired.

"Listen and you'll find out," answered Harris.

After the lapse of a few moments, during which time the careful work of enlarging the hole continued, he said:

"That's the reds trying to get in."

"That's what I thought before I sent for you."

"How long have they been working did you say?"

"Over an hour I am sure."

"Then they have some hole made by this time."

"Shall I take a feel, for they've stopped working?"

"You can if you like, but be careful about it."

Harris cautiously ran his hand along the logs, till his fingers encountered the edge of the hole. He then opened his hand to its full extent, so as to feel the size, and slowly let it fall downward; but instead of feeling what he expected, what was his astonishment, when he felt it light on the feathered scalp-lock of an Indian. No person, except the stranger, but would instantly have jerked his hand away; but not so with Harris. His fingers closed over the tuft with a grasp like iron, and he commenced pulling the head farther in, exclaiming as he did so in a loud voice:

"Turn me into a butter-tub if I ain't got hold of one of them by

the top-knot. Gosh, stranger, but he's a-jerking some, and if you don't lend a hand quick, he'll get away sure. I tell you, it's slippery holding on by these tassels!"

"Hold on to him! Where's his ears? Now, in he comes."

But this was easier said than done. The hole was sufficiently large to draw him through, but, it must be remembered that he had friends on the outside, who grasped his legs, and were using as strenuous efforts to draw him out as our friends were to pull him in. There now commenced a rather ludicrous contest for the mystery, these on one side holding on by his legs and breech-band, and the others fastening on to his scalp-lock and arms. Certainly, whatever pleasure it afforded those on either side, he, as the medium, did not relish it. With a quick, powerful kick, he freed his legs from the grasp of his friends, and thus removing the opposing power, threw to the ground those on the inside, himself coming on top. It would seem by this act, that he much rather would run the chances of captivity, than the more painful one of being pulled in two.

"Gosh, Mister, it's my 'pinion you're somewhat stretched. If it ain't done you any other good, it's taken the kinks out of you, and I guess you won't be round-shouldered for the rest of your life," remarked Harris, dryly.

He was now securely bound; and the Indians seeing that their plan of effecting an entrance had been discovered, made a general attack on all sides, of so fierce a nature, and so regardless of the loss they would sustain, that those within felt convinced that, should it last for any length of time, the assailants must be successful. The steady firing from both within and without lit up the scene with sufficient light for both to aim with some certainty. The fight raged with unremitting violence for a long time. Hope slowly was dying within the breasts of the whites, and the horrid yells of the Indians betokened their hopes of victory. Suddenly a sharp firing was heard from the westward of the fort. It caused a consternation among their savage foe, who conjectured that aid had arrived from some quarter of which they had not suspected. Not knowing the number of their new assailants they broke in confusion, regardless of the efforts of their chiefs to rally them, and ran toward the woods.

CHAPTER XII

SAFE.

"**W**as on 'arth don't you come out o' that brubbling and follow them sarpents? They're 'bout half whipped, and all you've got to do is give them a chase. Kill a few more on 'em, and then they'll leave this part of the country for good."

The voice all recognized as being that of Single Eye. The advice he gave was quickly repeated by the Unknown, when the gate was thrown open, and a party of the younger men, with the stranger at their head, rushed after the fleeing Indians. The storm had passed, bringing very little rain, and the stars, that now shone brightly, afforded the pursuers considerable light by which to follow their foe. Single Eye, Assa and the young men joined the party, and before their return the rout had been complete.

The hunter, together with his savage companion, did not show themselves till late the following afternoon. The Mohican seemed beside himself at the number of bloody trophies which hung at his belt. He checked himself, however, as he entered the block-house, and the old expression of hate once more settled on his face, as his eye encountered the figure of the captured Indian. Dickons greeted the hunter warmly, and commenced censuring him for not coming to their assistance at an earlier date.

"Now, stop a bit, Mr. Dickons, till I tell you the reason. You see it ain't 'cording to nature for a man to be here and all over at the same time. I sent word to you by the boy that the reds were coming, and if it hadn't been for the way things turned out, I'd been down to see you sooner; but, I'd got to watch the folks I stowed in the cave, and then that consarned Mohican must go get cotted; so you see I didn't have time to come afore."

The hunter gave an outline of what had befallen him, from the first moment of his arrival up to the present time, but the reader is already acquainted with the narrative. At its close, he asked:

"What's that man's name who's been doing your fighting for you? I telled you, boy, that they had a knowing one in here. But I'd like 'mazing well to shake his hand. Can't you make us 'quainted?"

Dickons replied that he was within the block-house, and they repaired thither, where the two were introduced, and soon were engaged in conversation. Assa, in the meanwhile, was hovering round the form of the bound Indian, wishing much that the prisoner's disposition was in his hands. Let us notice this captive for a few moments. He was evidently a chief, from his stately bearing. His

dress was of deer-skin, but of finer quality and more carefully prepared than that usually worn by his companions. The edges were elegantly adorned with beads, and other glittering gewgaws; a belt of wampum held his light tomahawk, knife, and a short dagger, while from his well-developed head, nodded the lofty plumes of the gray eagle, though they were much displaced by the grasp Harris had placed on them. His haughty eye scanned the faces of the men without wavering, and the expression of his countenance, whenever Asa passed before him, was one of conningled hate and mortification. He was silent as the Sphynx. No answer but a scowl would be returned to the many questions propounded. Dickons, therefore, inferred that he was not acquainted with the English tongue.

Pete and the Unknown, at last finished their conversation, and approached the spot where the warrior was bound.

"Wal, red-skin, you're in a fix, seems to me!" said the hunter.

The Indian raised his eye, and fixed it on his questioner, then started slightly and uttered the expression:

"Single Eye!"

"Oh, you've found your tongue, have you? Yes, that's my name, and guess you've heard of it afore, ain't you?"

The Indian slightly nodded, and muttered in his own language:

"Tawhich wessisen."

"Talk English, you consarned varmint. How on 'arth are people going to know you ain't afraid, if you tell them in the sort of talk they know nothing about, say?"

Receiving no answer, he fixed his eye steadily on that of the savage, and gazing long, at length remarked:

"Now, see here, it's no use your going to set stubborn about it, kase there's a way of making such chaps as you talk, and I don't know but if you'd answer a few questions we'd let you go with that beautiful scalp standing stiff on your head."

But the Indian still retained his unbroken silence, and the threat only caused his lips to wreath in a scornful smile. The hunter turned without further words, and left the place, followed by the M'Intosh. After their departure, Mary entered the room, and requesting the sentinel to retire, addressed the captive:

"Will you talk with me?" she asked.

The chief turned his look upon her. The hard lines of his face seemed to relax for a moment from their set expression, but as he replied, a shadow of contempt settled on his countenance.

"What good warrior talk wessisen? What can a good man tell Injin?"

"Would you like to regain your liberty, and once more be among your companions?"

The Indian's eye again met hers, while his face lit up with a gleam of hope. He answered her in a low, and it can be called beautifully melodious voice:

Why should I fear you? or, I am not afraid of you

"Why pale-face squaw talk to Injin so—why make him t'ink she friend? Dat bad, say one t'ing, mean nudder. Injin t'ink of dat long time."

"And why should I not talk to you in a friendly manner?" she asked, earnestly. "Would you imbue your hands in my blood? Would you do harm to one who has never done you an injury?"

The Indian did not understand all she uttered, but quite enough to reach the sense, for he replied without hesitancy:

"Don't care any t'ing 'bout it," he answered, "don't care tell you whedder you're friend or enemy, cause don't know; nebber do any t'ing for warrior; do somet'ing for warrior, den he friend, do not ing, den he en'my. Warrior of great King Philip don't know, don't want know, pale-face friend; so make no diff'rence—kill all—scarp all—squaw, old man, all—tell you don't care, don't make diff'rence. Now, let Injin go?" He paused, and then, before letting Mary have time for a reply, continued in a voice of contempt: "What good warrior talk wid squaw? what she know 'bout, to talk in council wid big chief? Good for work, dat all! Eagle Wing no tell her all he t'ink—dat be good for Injin!"

"I know your nation think that a woman, or squaw as you call her, is unworthy of notice in great matters, but, I do not intend to let that change the purpose I had in view, nor the words you just uttered; and whatever wrong my nation, as a whole, have done to you or yours, I, by my acts, will endeavor as far as possible to remedy. You must make your escape from here, and I will help you do so."

The youthful warrior drew himself proudly up, and an expression of pleasure stamped itself on his countenance. He spoke in his own tongue, as if to himself, or else forgetting the maiden did not understand him.

"Eagle Wing now loves the fair flower of the pale-face. Her smile is bright, and her heart is good. She will help the warrior go back to his people, but what shall he do for her? Eagle Wing never forgets a favor. A voice has whispered to him what he shall do, and he will tell what the voice said. The pale-face maiden shall dwell in peace, she shall never feel the sharp knife on her brow; no more warriors shall come in their war paint to frighten her; she shall sleep in peace, for she smiled on Eagle Wing when the great Manitou hid his face. Her face is here, in the red-man's heart, good!"

He checked himself as he saw his words were not understood, and then added in his broken, yet impressive language:

"Injin lab pale-face squaw. No more warriors come this-a-way she safe. Eagle Wing say so—no tell her. Warrior tell somethin' dough: better open ear to hear."

"What is it?" she asked.

"Better stay in by house till Eagle Wing gone long time—no good go far way. Injin in wood sometimes—can't see, but he's dere. Squaw stay in wigwam till one moon, den go in woods, far away if like, no harm den, no Injins see, all far way."

"I believe all you say, and will try to remember your advice; and as I have said, you shall be free, and that before the night is over."

While this interview was passing, the Unknown had selected a body of men, and, placing them under the command of Single Eye, sent them to watch the village. Robert, together with Mr. Hendrick's two sons, was on his way back to the cave. John made some excuse to linger at the block-house.

It had not been considered safe for the entire removal of all from the block-house; but, on the morrow, our friends in the cave were to be transferred to the companionship of their neighbors. A council was to be held for the purpose of deciding when it would be entirely safe for all to take possession of their homes. Pete and Asa had volunteered to act as scouts, and beat up the surrounding country, and to report, without loss of time, the approach of any other body of their enemy, should they intend a renewal of the attack. Thus matters were arranged, and, as all had been deprived of rest more or less, since the first appearance of their foe, sleep was early and eagerly sought.

No sound was heard, save the hard breathing of the men, or the steady walk of the sentinel. Mary, stepping carefully over their prostrate forms, started on her errand of mercy. Following the side of the building, she finally reached the spot where the Indian sat. He was expecting her, and as she touched him, he said:

"Knew you come."

"Hush! you must not make the least noise, or we shall be discovered."

The bonds on his feet and legs were cut quickly; then his arms were released. The opening he had made was yet unclosed, and leading him to it, she motioned him to pass through.

"You must now do for yourself—I can not assist you farther. My wishes for your safety you have; and remember that Single Eye and the Mohican are out."

He was soon on the outside, and muttering a few indistinct thanks, lost himself in the darkness. Mary hastened away, and without being detected—as she supposed—rejoined her friends above.

As morning broke in all its beauty, the inmates met on the outside of the block-house. It was a joyous reunion. How different the contrast with the previous day! Yet, as the looking back was done on fathers, brothers, sisters, mothers, and all who held a place of love or friendship in their hearts, a shroud of anxiety would envelop itself, lest their recent foe should gather strength to return with renewed vigor to the attack.

"Wal, folks, how are you all doing this fine morning?" exclaimed Single Eye, as he and his inseparable companion came from the village.

"I guess we're better than common. How's yourself?" answered the Unknown, acting as spokesman for the rest.

"Putty well, only a little stiff like. You see, Mr. What's-your-name, I ain't as young as I once was; but I tell you there's some snap left yet in me, and all that's wanting to bring it out is to lay my eyes on them dod-rotted red-skins."

"Do you think, Simpson, that there is further danger from them?" asked Dickons.

"Don't think there is; but Mohigan an' me's going to take a look round for a while, and then we'll tell you all 'bout it."

Assa had, in the mean time, repaired inside, to gratify his native hate by a look at their captive. Much to his chagrin, he discovered that the Indian was gone. The only remaining proofs that once he was there were the severed bonds. Long and earnestly did he gaze on them, as if to convince himself of the astonishing fact that his escape was real. At last, turning on his heel, with a disappointed grunt, he sought the side of Simpson.

"What on 'arth's the matter with you?" asked the hunter, as he noticed the expression of the Indian's countenance.

"Where Injin gone?"

"Wal, guess he's inside, ain't he?"

"Ain't there—gone!"

"You ain't looked good," replied Pete, carelessly, though there was more anxiety in his tone than he wished to manifest.

"Look good, Single Eye; find rope, but Injin gone through hole."

"Gosh, Assa, you're certain 'bout it, eh?"

The Indian nodded.

Pete glanced around, until his eye encountered the figure of the Unknown. Going to him, he asked:

"See here, you; where's that Injin you catched t'other night?"

"Don't know, if he ain't inside; ain't seen him this morning," was answered, rather sharply.

"You needn't be so sharp 'bout it, anyhow," replied Simpson.

When Mary had set the captive free, she supposed no one was cognizant of the fact; but the Unknown had noticed her from the first, even having heard the conversation that she had held with the prisoner the previous morning; but, feeling interested in the young woman, he had allowed her to carry out her plan of liberating the captive, without his interference. Simpson was not long in letting it become generally known that the captive had escaped; and, although several had noticed that they had not seen him that morning, yet they supposed he had been removed by order of their commander. He was gone now, that was very apparent. Single Eye and Assa fumed about it a long time, but the matter finally died out. There was too much rejoicing over their own escape to let this remain long on their minds.

A little before noon, Mr. Hendrick's family arrived from the cave, and were greeted warmly by the company. Question after question was asked them, and their story was as oft repeated to the eager listeners. Immediately after partaking of their midday meal, a gene-

ral removal to the village was commenced, and as the sun was setting behind the woolly hills, seeming in its last rays to smile a peaceful good-night, all had again taken possession of their rude yet happy homes.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE UNKNOWN'S HISTORY, AND A NEW MISHAP

AT AN early hour in the morning, Mary rose and busied herself in re-arranging the house. Being obliged to go out on some errand she noticed the Unknown seated on the front of a new building, his face buried in his hands, and his long rifle lying heavily in the hollow of his arm, as if it was his only friend. A feeling of pity was felt for him. The promise which he had made to communicate to her something of his history induced her to approach him; yet, in doing so, she felt as if her motive was not an entirely disinterested one. The narrative of his life would benefit her in what way, or confer on her what? Nothing. While she was thus occupied with her own thoughts, he had gained her side.

“Miss Dickens!”

She started, and, with her eyes bent on the ground, answered in the monosyllable:

“Sir.”

“I mentioned the other night, when my feelings mastered my judgment, that I would tell you why I appear in this garb, and who I really am—did I not?”

“You did, sir.”

“And would you wish to listen to it this morning?”

“Not if its recital will give you pain.”

“I hold, Miss, that it is a duty I owe myself, no matter how much it might pain me in the telling; yet, it is not wrong to speak sparingly of what is constantly occupying my thoughts. Had I not given way to my feelings the other night, I most certainly would not do so now; intent; but, you may be led to believe me a rogue who is obliged to cloak himself in a borrowed character, to avoid punishment. Perhaps I am all this!” He spoke hesitatingly, as he said: “Man, Miss Dickens, judges of his fellows’ actions, rather than of his motives.”

“And yet, sir,” she timidly answered, “if not from person’s acts, of what else can we form an opinion of his general character?”

“I see you reason as does the world at large, but, that is not to say that either you or it are wholly right.”

"I do not set up my opinion as one that can not be altered," she replied.

"It would be a waste of time did we enter upon this subject. The time might be well spent, but I can not spare the moments my self."

"Then you are going to leave us?"

"Such is my determination."

"And nothing will alter it?"

"Nothing, but an occurrence like the one we have passed through."

"I am sorry you are so determined; but, let me induce you to take the morning meal, with father and myself, then I will go with you as far as the clearing."

"I will please you in this, but you must again promise me that to no person will you commit my story. Even if you do hear it make the theme of conversation, be silent! It might endanger my life."

She promised, and together they sought the house. Little was said during the meal. The questions asked by Dickons, he answered in the language he had used to him from the first. At last, Mary having arranged all things, and saying she would return soon, left the room. A few moments had elapsed, when he rose, and bidding Dickons a careless good-by, followed her out, and met her a short distance at the clearing where she had waited for him. Together, they silently walked to a tree whose shade felt refreshing; for, early as the morning was, the air was close and sultry. Here the Unknown seated himself, and, motioning his companion to do likewise, abruptly commenced the outline of his life:

"Of my childhood, Miss Dickons, I will say nothing, as nothing of interest to you is attached to it; but come immediately to that part of the tragedy that connects me to be what I am. You are acquainted with the history of England?"

"I am with all the principal events," she replied.

"You have then heard of what is called the *murder* of King Charles the First, and the government is ruled by the Parliament under Oliver Cromwell?"

"I have sir."

"Do you condemn this Cromwell, or his acts?"

"Do not ask a simple girl like me a question that has puzzled statesmen to answer."

He smiled a sweet smile, and removing his rule cap, allowed his locks to fall over his eyesworn brow. Then continuing, but in a less excited voice: "I followed the fortunes of this Cromwell, and held the rank of Major-General in his army. The reasons for my doing so were, that my native country was becoming, under the reign of that Charles, a land where a man could not perform an action, speak a word, or scarcely dare think, unless it was sanctioned by the crown. Thus men Charles had collected around him a host of *things*, not men, who gave free vent to their passions; and when the people—*one of whom I was*—murmured, they were punished by fines, the

pillory, cropping the ears, and other barbarous means, to compel them to silence. This, Mary, the people at last would not submit to. They rose in their might, with Cromwell at their head, and overcame the determined resistance which the king made. He was finally taken prisoner, tried, found guilty of misusing his people's trusts, by judges selected by and from them, and suffered the penalty of a death on the scaffold. Miss Dickens, I was one of his judges!"

"You?" she exclaimed, springing to her feet, and gazing with an expression in which awe, respect and fear were clearly manifested.

"Yes, me," he uttered.

"Then you are?" she faltered.

He fixed his eagle eye full upon her, and drawing his tall, commanding figure to its utmost height, while his voice sunk to that low, tremulous tone of pride and exultation:

"I am WILLIAM GORFE, styled the regicide!"

Had a body of their late enemy suddenly appeared before her, Mary could not have felt more consternation than the utterance of that name caused her. She was but a simple girl after all, though, as before mentioned, one superior to her class. Yet, when she knew that before her stood a man who had acted so prominent a part in the history of kings, no wonder that her simple nature was stricken with surprise and awe.

"Miss Dickens, have you no parting word, no God bless you for the old man, to cheer what little of life's short span is left for him to live?" he at length asked. She started, and raised her eyes in which glistened tears which his last words had called up. Extending both hands, which he took in his nervous grasp, she said:

"May God bless you, sir, and keep you in his holy care, till it pleases Him to call you from a life of so much bitterness to dwell with Him forever. God bless you."

And bursting into a true sorrow for his leaving, she leaned her head confidently on his breast.

"May he bless and keep you, too, my child!"

He held his hands tremblingly on her young head a moment, and then heaving a deep sigh, with a "Good-bye, Mary," turned and strode rapidly toward the forest. On the outskirts he raised his cap, and, waving it toward her a moment as a farewell signal, hid himself to view in the leafy woods beyond. She never saw him again.

Long did she remain seated beneath that tree, giving free vent to her feelings, until the sunbeams began slowly to extend toward the east. Rising restily, she was on the point of returning by the most direct path to her home; but recollecting her fine bare cheeks of emotion which might excite the questions of her father, she determined to first seek a woodland spring, and wash away the traces of her tears. This spring lay to the extreme north-west of the church, and around the village, and at some distance from it. She at length

reached it, and seated herself to rest, for she had walked rapidly, and the day was warm. Her thoughts were still absorbed with the story of the Unknown, whose last words still rung in her ear. Rising, she stooped over the water, but before disturbing its glassy surface, paused to admire the distinctness with which every rock, tree and flower were there mirrored. She reached her hands and was about to plunge them beneath the cool surface, when she started with a quick cry of fear to her feet, for, in that reflection, she had seen the savage face of an Indian, in all the hideous paintings of the war-path. Turning her horrified gaze to see the reality of the reflection, her heart for the moment stood still, for not on one only, does her eye rest but on six stalwart forms, who, unnoticed and unheard had discovered her, and determined that she at least should be taken as a trophy of their prowess.

"Oh, God, at last I am a captive!" she uttered, in a shrill cry, as the thought of her home to which she had been so lately restored rushed to her memory.

The Indian nearest where she stood stepped to her side and said in good English, while he touched the hilt of his knife in a significant manner;

"Pale face maiden must make no noise; if do, warrior's knife make hash. No do you harm if go with warrior still."

"I have no choice, and will follow you," she replied at once recovering her usual fearless manner, knowing that fear would only afford sport to her captors. She determined to bear up bravely, and meet with a stout heart the good or ill that might fall to her lot.

"Good,—come!" was the short command; and, with much haste, but with the utmost caution, they started from the spring, carefully selecting the most sorry part of the wood for their path. They were led by the Indian who had addressed the few words of conversation to her, and she was by a sign ordered to follow, while the rest fell in, one after the other, trod in each other's track. So steadily was the pace maintained, that Mary at last became so entirely fatigued that it was with the utmost difficulty she was able to drag herself forward. Her guide at length seemed to notice this, and halted for a moment, called up one of his companions, to whom he addressed something in a low tone. The Indian instantly placed himself by her side, and, as they again started, seized her roughly by the arm, and half supporting, half dragging her, they hurried forward.

It was some time after dark before they halted for the night. Partaking of food, a blanket was given Mary, who quickly availed herself of it, for she was completely exhausted. There was a marked difference between the manner of her captors and those who had taken her. The latter were all savages and savages are in hiding their true nature, and are very gentle when resting, but hers employed every artifice to keep her on edge to observe every mark. Seeing she had taken a deep sleep from which she would not be likely to awaken until morning, the Indian who led her, instantly started back on

their trail. They continued running backward and forward for over a mile, now and then diverging from it, and making a large circuit in doing so, carefully stepping on rocks, the bodies of fallen trees, or any other hard substance that would leave no mark. After proceeding in the outward direction for some time, they would turn in the direction where lay the maiden watched by her solitary guard, and endeavor to leave as many impressions as possible. For hours they continued their exertions, and, at last, when they were again assembled, they would lay for sometime in one spot, and rise and repose in another, by doing this, endeavoring to make it appear that not only had their numbers been greatly increased, but also that the entire party had rested there, hoping by this to intimidate the whites—who they well knew would follow—and cause them to suppose their party too strong to be attacked with success.

As soon as it was light enough for the Indians to see their way, Mary was aroused and the march resumed. As on the previous day, very little time was allowed the poor girl for rest, and, long before nightfall, it was found necessary for two of the savages to support her, so entirely exhausted had she become. Mary could not but notice that, instead of their course being in a straight line, it was constantly varying. Sometimes they faced the east, and sometimes the west; at one time they were ascending the steep side of a mountain, almost to its very top; then they would commence the descent, going over much ground, but gaining very little distance, in the true direction. Why this was done she was unable to say, but exerted all her strength to follow, suppressing the cry of pain, as her feet, bruised and bleeding, would press against the rough surface of the ground.

On the afternoon of the fifth day, as they reached the bank of a small stream, the leader of the party left them, and returned shortly, seated in a canoe, which he guided to where they were. Hastily embarking in it, the party shot rapidly onward. This afforded Mary the greatest relief, and she was in hopes the remainder of the journey would be accomplished by water; but in this she was disappointed. After they had proceeded some five miles, they again landed, and securely fastening the birchen boat, they motioned her on. The moon was rising behind the trees, as the leader uttered a sharp but single whoop, which was almost instantly answered by one of similar nature. In a short time Mary found herself in an Indian village. She was conducted to a wigwam situated in the center of the place. By the moon's light she discovered that it was larger than the rest. She was briefly told that this was to be her quarters, and given to understand that all attempts to escape would be useless. She endeavored to ascertain what their future intentions were toward her, but received no reply.

Morning at length dawned, but the girl slept on. At last, toward the middle of the forenoon, she awoke, feeling refreshed, though her feet were much swollen, and very painful. She was seated with her

back toward the opening of the tent, when a light footfall arrested her notice. Turning to see who had entered, her eye fell on the figure of an Indian maiden. Both started, and Mary was on the point of speaking in her usual tone, when she was checked by a quick motion from the woman.

"Weetamoo?" she exclaimed, in an astonished whisper, "is that you?"

"Yes me," replied the squaw. "Make little noise—Injun see I friend."

"But why are you here?"

"Injun come and take Weetamoo from warrior."

"But does not Assawomset know that you are captured?"

"He know—come soon and take Weetamoo."

"I hope he will, and me also. But why are you a captive?"

"Cous Narraganset make big fight wid pale-face."

"But I can not see what that has to do with your captivity, because you belong to that tribe."

"No, don't," she replied somewhat angrily; "used to don't now. Me all Assawomset's—and Mohigan—love pale-face like warrior do—we hate Narragansets—take scalp if can."

Could it be possible, thought Mary, that the act of marriage would so entirely remove all the love of tribe and of parents from the heart of the Indian maiden, and, in its place, engender the promptings that raged in the breast of her husband? But so it seemed.

"But does your tribe know of your changed feelings toward them?"

"Know well 'nough 'bout dat—but Narraganset no my tribe, tell you, me give all to warrior when I go lib in his wigwam. Hate Philip—hate all Injun that me fight with Mohigan. Injun never say thing he don't mean, never gib name don't mean something."

"Mary, at her request, gave as correct a description as possible of the route they had followed from the moment of starting from the spring, and after she had finished they commenced planning some way of escape.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED.

WHEN Mary had left the village in company with the Unknown, Single Eye had noticed her, and, as hour after hour passed without her return, he became restless, and would walk to the end of the street, where he could see the full extent of the clearing, then retrace his steps to the house. During one of these walks he met Assa,

and, leading him to where the footprints of Mary were plainly visible, said:

"I'm kinder skared about that girl, Asa, for she's been away too long. So jest you take a run on her track; and find out where she's gone. If you find any thing out of the way, you come and tell me about it first."

The Indian, without remark, started as he was bidden. The hunter directed his own steps toward Mr. Dickons' cottage.

"How are you squire?" was his salutation, as he entered the door.

"Glad to see you, Single Eye. Come in and take a seat," replied Dickons.

"Don't mind if I do a minute or two," he answered. "But I'd like to know what on 'arth's become of your daughter?"

"She stepped out after breakfast, saying she would return soon. I think she must have run in to help some of the neighbors, and has been detained longer than she thought for."

"Wal, I guess you ain't quite right about that, 'cause I saw her go out on the clearing, and nobody don't live there."

"You must be mistaken about that, Single Eye," replied Dickons, though his manner indicated some uneasiness.

"Wal, squire, you can just make up your mind it's so, sartin; and I've put Asa on her track to find out what keeps her so long."

"Let us go at once and help him in his search, for your words make me think something *has* happened," he said, leaving the house.

"This ain't no time for women-folks to be a running away far from home, 'specially as the Mohigan and me ain't had a look around to see if any of them varmints have stopped to take a last look of us," remarked the hunter, as he followed Dickons.

"When they had arrived at a point where nothing obstructed their sight, both observed the Indian returning at a pace that indicated his search had proved successful—now running, and then bounding forward with great rapidity. When he had reached them, he hesitated about speaking on seeing Dickons.

"Out with it, Asa, be it bad or good. We ain't babies that are going to blubber over it," said Single Eye anxiously.

"She gone," was the answer.

"Wal, where on 'arth has she gone to, that's what we're arter?"

"Philip Injun take her wid 'em."

The hunter uttered a significant sound between a word and a grunt, and then turning to the Mohigan, inquired as to the number of her captors. The Indian answered in his own language, so that Dickons could not understand him. Of one thing the squire was assured—that his daughter had been carried away by some of his life foes. The more he thought of it the more his anguish increased; his darling Mary was in the power of the ruthless savage. Oh! was her fate already sealed? Was she, even now, locked in the cold embrace of death, or reserved for the fiendish torture of the stake?

Was her tender flesh to be pierced by the arrow, shot by the tiny hand of a pappoose, or her limbs torn slowly asunder by the bent sapling? These awful surmises rushed through his mind, until he lost all control of his feelings, and seating himself on a log, burying his face in his hands, he burst into tears.

"Wal, Injin, if there a n't a man crying, and who would have thought it?" exclaimed Single Eye, with astonishment; then addressing Dickens, he continued "Look here, squire, it ain't going to help matters by taking on in that way. So the quicker you stop, and see about getting somebody started to drag her back, why the sooner you'll see her, that's all."

Dickens' first feelings were, that the hunter showed little respect for his sorrow; but he reflected that the man's heart was tender, though his tone and manner were rough, and that he would be the first to start for her rescue. Raising himself, he led the way back, and soon the entire village was apprised of what had occurred. What was now to be done was the question, but none seemed able to answer it. Single Eye and the Mohican had calmly stood listening to the several propositions, till at last the former became impatient.

"Wal, fella," he said, "you've all on you had your say, and the gal a n't any nearer back than she was an hour ago. I don't think you know how to get her, nuther. I'm going to take matters in hand; and first, I want about a dozen of the best of you to go along."

The first man that offered was Harris, the next one of Mr. Hendrick's sons. Soon thirty had volunteered, who were not only willing but anxious to assist in the undertaking. The hunter having made his selection with much care, finally dismissed them for a short time, that they might provide themselves with food and ammunition. The time soon sped. Once more the little band gathered together, and then started, with many a fervent prayer for their success.

"You jest lead off, Asew, for that spring, as you've been over the ground afore, and we'll make calculations of how we've got to work. Drot the varmints," he continued, "jest as I'd make up my mind to take a hunt afore fall, they must make tracks with that gal, and spoil all my fun!"

They soon arrived at the spot, and were halted by Single Eye some distance off, when he and the Indian, with Robert Willet, (who had insisted upon accompanying them) advanced to inspect the foot-prints of the enemy.

"Now, hey, I'll teach you something 'bout trails; so you mind what I say. Take a look here," he said, as they reached the edge of the spring: "here's where she came to drink or wash, and here's where she got down on her hands and knees. Don't you see, now, hey, where she first sold those saplings? she's jumped like, here there's the mark of her toes kicking up the dirt and leaves."

"Do you think then she resisted them?" asked Robert.

* A plan of warfare which was, at that time, very common among the N. E. England Indians.

"That's a queer question!" was the reply. "How on 'arth could she do any thing against such odds? Here's the place where the Injin came up to her," he added, as he carefully stooped down to inspect the foot-prints.

"How many do you think there were?"

"I ain't been to see yet; but, jest look at that Injin. What's the matter with you, Assa? You ain't been bit by a snake?" he called out.

The Indian thus addressed advanced to where they were, and speaking in his own language replied: "The warriors who captured my squaw, are the same as have stolen the horses, except one!"

"How do you know *that*?" asked Single Eye, in the same form of speech.

"Because I noticed carefully their foot-marks then, and these are the same."

The hunter briefly narrated the story of the capture of the Michigan's wife, and what he had just discovered.

"Assa will then join with more zest in the pursuit?"

"Guess he *will*, boy! But let's move on."

It was with much difficulty that the course of their foe could be followed, owing to the pains the Indians had taken in the selection of the ground they passed over, and to the precaution they had used in obliterating the trail. To the keen-sighted hunter, however, passing unnoticed, while he led them on with as much rigour as possible. In many cases, where, to the inexperienced eye of his companions, not a single mark could be discerned, he detected significant marks. The fear that they would not be able to overtake the Indians before they had reached their village was Single Eye's only anxiety. Night overtaking them, they were obliged to halt, and preparations were made for encamping. On the following morning, at an early hour, they proceeded onward until they reached the spot where the Indians had encamped, by running back on their trail, to receive their pursuers in regard to their numbers.

"Well, I do 'sore, if they ain't made a pretty mess of things out here! Take a look at this ar trail, boy, and see how the cursed varmints have been a-treading it down!"

"They must have fell in with a large body of their friends," replied Robert.

"I'm kinder thinking that way myself, but mind I ain't going to say so, out and out, till I catch 'em some. Jest if I ain't mighty 'posed to this hard-work. They ain't got no good people with 'em the start they got on us!"

The hunter now bade them remain where they were, and, putting his Robert to follow, proceeded onward. Every new feature that presented itself called forth a remark, and the young man could not repress a smile at the quaint expressions to which he gave utterance.

"Now, boy, you jest kinder get the shape of that fer-wid's foot in your head, and let's know if you come across it again. You can tell

by that patch he's sowed on his heel. See here where this old badger's left the trail and gone somewhere on his own hook! I'll just follow that chap a bit, and see what he's been about."

The route this Indian had taken led them for some distance in a direction opposite to the true trail. It then turned, and ran nearly parallel with it till it again turned, and finally led them to where the first night's rest had been made.

"Wal, boy, it's all right," exclaimed Single Eye, seating himself on the body of a prostrate tree, to wait the appearance of Asa.

"What is?" inquired Robert.

"The trail."

"I do not understand you."

"Wal, I mean jist this, that they ain't come across any of their friends."

"But if that is the case, how do you account for so many footsteps?"

"Suppose you walk once over a piece of ground, you'd make one track, wouldn't you?"

"Certainly."

"Then suppose you'd walk over it a dozen times, you'd make a dozen tracks?"

"Yee."

"That's jist what them red's have been doing. But here's the Injin."

The Mohican was observed coming toward them from the opposite side, and as he reached them he uttered the expression—

"Good."

"That's what I think," answered the hunter; "but couldn't you take the trouble to say a few more words 'bout matters?"

"No most Injin—his time as come from spring," replied the Mohican, in his singular way of rendering the English language.

"What makes you think so, Asa?" inquired Robert.

"Six Injin make big trail, if mind to—run 'bout many times; make path like tink many warriors! but don't do dat—try tell me; but Single Eye come—Mohican come—I n't know dat—know humbly, when Asa take sleep!" A grim smile flitted over the bronze face.

The hunter and Indian walked apart, and were engaged in earnest conversation for some time. At its close, Single Eye motioned Robert to follow, where Asa went back to taking forward the remainder of the party. They now proceeded rapidly on their way, following the trail as the light lasted, and starting with the first dawn of the next morning, until they arrived at the spot where the Indians had taken the canoe. Here even Single Eye was at a loss how to direct their course.

A close search was made along the bank for some distance, but to no purpose, for not a single trace could be discovered.

"Gee, I'm in a fix for once in my life," said Simpson, after their search had failed.

"Let's explore both sides of the stream for some distance, in each direction, perhaps we may discover something," suggested Robert.

"Don't see any use bov going both sides when they only took one," was the reply.

"But how are you going to know which is the right one, unless we find some signs?"

"I'm going to calk'late a little first, kase I ain't going to run my legs off, when my head can save 'em."

"Very well, then; let's commence reasoning at once, as we have no time to lose."

"Wal, boy, first an' foremost, then, that way's down-stream, as that's up, ain't it?"

"You are most certainly correct," replied Robert, smiling.

"It's easier going down-stream in a canoe, than pulling up it."

"Very true."

"Wal, that's fixed; and that's a start for the end. Now, boy, they've jst got seven in their party, and that's 'bout as many as a canoe that would float in this stream could carry. They could go down well enough, but when they started to go up, that's another thing. Now, you see, them red-skins are in some sort of a hurry, and they could walk up on shore faster than they could pull a canoe, and they ain't done that on this or t'other side, kase there ain't no trail; so you see I'm going down, and y' all find I'm right."

Single Eye was not the man to hesitate in carrying out any plan which he had determined in his own mind was right. He instantly began to act upon his last decision. Dividing the party equally, he had one half under the control of Assa, who crossed the stream, and carefully inspected the bank on that side, while he remained on his own side, and did likewise. They proceeded on in this manner, until they were informed by a signal from Assa that the trail was again found. To re-cross was the work of a few moments, when with the utmost speed, they continued on, until from some suspicious signs that had met both the hunter's and Indian's eye, it was deemed prudent to halt, and hold farther counsel. Single Eye led the party into a dense thicket, where they were entirely concealed from observation. Bidding the men to remain, without attempting to stir until his return, he left them, refusing to allow even the Indian to accompany him. The course he took branched off from the one they had pursued. Instead of following the trail, which led through open ground, he chose that part of the forest where grew a thick underbrush. It would seem from his actions that he had instinctively become aware that the object he sought was not far distant. Each step was taken with the greatest caution. After proceeding a short distance, he would stop and listen. He had arrived near the summit of a rise of ground, and was urging on his footsteps with greater rapidity, when a suppressed cough reached his ear. Turning upward, he discovered an Indian seated at no great distance from him. He instantly threw himself flat on the earth, and slowly lessened the distance between them, by crawling cautiously along. The thought flashed through his mind, that could he but get possession of the clothes which the

Indian wore, it would considerably aid him in accomplishing his purposes, which was to visit the village.

Still continuing his snake-like course, he at last reached a large tree that would entirely screen his person. He then laid his rifle on the ground, where it was hidden from view. Then, drawing his knife, he glanced around the tree, to see if the slight noise he had made had been noticed. Unconscious enough sat his victim. The hunter at last seeming to be satisfied, uttered a loud whoop, which seemed to come from a greater distance than where he stood, although in the same direction, instantly following it by a long, continued *la-hi-a*—the two sounds combined indicating to the ear that should hear it, that assistance was required.

The Indian started at once to his feet, and came running directly toward where Single Eye was standing. As he reached the tree, and was about passing it, the trail of the hunter met his eye, which caused him to stop instantly. At that moment a whoop similar to the one he had first heard, only much louder, again startled his ear, coming as it did in the direction which he had started, causing him to turn and look backward in astonishment, bringing his back toward Simpson for a moment. That moment was sufficient, for, springing with a motion quick as thought from behind his shelter, the hunter's knife was buried to the hilt in his back, cleaving in twain his heart. The savage fell forward dead, without uttering a sound.

"Well, he's done for," said Simpson, aloud; "but if the boy was here I'd get a sermon 'bout it. But what's the use of being chicken-hearted 'bout a thing that's got to be done?"

Hastily removing the clothes from the savage, and arraying himself in them, he carefully hid his own, as also the dead body.

"Gosh, if I ain't forgot 'bout my eye! Them varmints will know me by that, sure."

As this thought flashed through his mind, his next was how it could be remedied. After thinking a short time, he hastily proceeded to the body, and, removing the rubbish he had thrown over it, drew his knife and severed the scalp-lock. He then selected a piece of cloth from his own wardrobe, and securely fastening the tail of growthy-haired hair in the center, doubled it in the Indian's blood, and then wound it round his neck, in such a manner as to bring the hair directly on top, so that the ends of the cloth came well down on the left side of his face, completely hiding his blindness, and giving him the appearance of being badly wounded.

"I'm tumbled in a trick; and guess I'll try fast whether Asa'll know me, kase if he don't, them varmints ain't going to. But I'll first take a look over the hill, and see what's there."

When he reached the spot where the Indian had been seated, a sight met his eye which caused him to gaze in admiration.

He found himself standing on the crest of a cliff which extended downward hundreds of feet, its base resting in the valley below. Through this ran a small but turbulent stream, hewing its way through

the granite rock, as it hurried along to its bed, the sea. On either side rose lofty mountains, or the land would take a more gradual rise rolling far back in beautiful undulations of hill and plain, while in the center of that lovely valley could be seen the wigwam village of the Indians. The hunter gazed long and earnestly on the scene, until the flight of time warned him to hasten back to his companions.

His approach was now to be conducted with as much caution and danger as if he was about visiting his enemy, for so completely was he disguised that it was a query whether or not he would be recognized even by the keen-eyed Mohican.

As soon as Single Eye had departed, Assa had thrown himself up on the ground, and was now in a sound slumber. The remainder of the party were seated around, some engaged in a low conversation, while others whiled away their time in cleaning their guns. Robert and Mr. Hendrick's son sat apart, the latter listening to some remark made by Willet, to which he answered :

"You are correct in your surmise; and on our return the arrangement you propose shall be carried out, provided Mary—"

"Mat wonck kunna monie,"* replied a low, deep voice, close by them.

Both turned their gaze in the direction from whence the sound came, and observed the tall figure of an Indian, who appeared to have been wounded in the head—so they took it—leaning against a tree. They both seized their guns, and sprung to their feet.

With a wave of his hand, the supposed Indian checked them—for they were about to fire—and pointing to the bloody bandage around his head, said, slowly, and as if weak from the loss of blood :

"Pale-face no shoot—Winnepuchet soon go to Sonwauhat—soon be in happy hunting-ground."

"What brings you here?" demanded Robert.

"Don't know you here, else no come. Bad hurt Injin trail; don't know what do. See trail, den keep 'way."

The noise had awakened Assa, who came forward, his tomahawk already in his hand, but Robert bade him remain at a distance. He was again about addressing Winnepuchet, when the supposed savage stepped forward, and in a voice all recognized, said :

"Guess I'm safe enough, boy, when you nor Assa don't know me."

Their surprise can well be imagined at this sudden transformation of voice, and the hunter was now flooded with questions.

* You shall see her no more.

† The Indians have a God by this name, which signifies—"The Great North-west God."

CHAPTER XIV.

CUTTING A WAY FOR LIFE, AND CUTTING CAPERS AT A WELLING.

THE sun had set, and darkness had slowly gathered around the form of Mary and her Indian friend. They remained silently posted on the outside of the wigwam, watching the somewhat mysterious movements of a wounded Indian who was repeatedly passing them, and, Mary thought, managing each time to get nearer. She at last called the attention of Westamoo to the fact. The Indian, perceiving he had attracted their attention, walked toward where the guard sat, and in a few moments they saw him take his place.

As the savage disappeared from sight, the wounded man arose, and in a careless manner approached to where they sat; but what was the amazement of both, when the well-known voice of Single Eye issued from the lips of the apparent Indian.

"Keep still, both on you, and look every way but at me, while I say a few words to you."

"How did you get here, Single Eye, and are any of our friends with you?" forgetting to act as the hunter had just cautioned her.

"Well, if you want just like the rest of the women-folks, *sure*! Why don't you do as I tell you, and if you'll just hold your tongue a bit, I'll tell you all you want to know. Look at that Injun; she don't 'pear to care a snap 'bout hearing, and I guess she's about as glad to see me as you. Don't you see how I got here, kase if you don't, take another look, and you'll see nothing but a leather-faced Injun with a bloody head on his shoulders. Do you think I look like Pete Simpson?"

"You are well disguised," replied Mary.

"That's my 'pinion. But we ain't got much time to talk, so I'll just tell you what I want you to do. You kinder open your ears a little longer, Westamoo."

"We hear all Single Eye say," replied the squaw.

"I want you to keep awake to-night, kase, if I call for you I don't want to be kept waiting. But here comes that red-skin back again, and I'll turn into an Injun again."

Single Eye had represented himself as belonging to a distant tribe, who had been sent as a runner from King Philip, but who had encountered a party of whites the day previous, and, in making his escape, had received a wound in his head. As he addressed his last remarks to Mary, his eye had discerned, in the darkness, the return of the guard, accompanied by several others. He was well aware that

he would be obliged to answer some very close questions respecting the movements of Philip, but with the recklessness so common to him he left all to chance, although he had gathered enough of the movements of that chieftain to make his answers truthful, as to the most important points.

He had, with some haste, reached the spot where he had temporarily relieved the guard, and ere many moments the Indians joined him.

"From whence comes my brother?" asked one in his own language, who, by his superabundance of ornament, Pete took to be the chief.

"From the great sachem, Philip of Puchamkett."

"And to what tribe does my brother belong?"

"To the Pokanokets."

"Where is the sachem?"

"I parted with him to the westward of Swansea."

"Does my brother know where he will go next, so that my warriors may join him?"

"The great king is wise: his mouth is shut; does my brother want to take the war-path before the leaves turn red?"

"My young men are ready; their knives are sharp; we will join the great sachem before another moon. Does not my brother think when he may go?"

"He will fight at Swansea, but the Narraganset's braves gather at Sunk Squaw."

"My brother is wounded?"

The hunter nodded.

"Did the pale-face do this?"

"It was from the rifle of the great warrior, Single Eye."

"Why does my brother call him great? Why does he praise an enemy?"

"The hunter and the Mohican have killed many of our braves; their scalps hang in the wigwam of Assiwanset; they will kill more; none of our young men can overtake them. Single Eye is a fox, and as swift as a deer. Single Eye is a great warrior; the Great Spirit helps him. He took from our braves the Mohican who was a prisoner; he has driven us from the village."

"He is a coward," replied the chief angrily; "he runs from us—he is a woman!"

"You lie, you thieving, greasy, dirty, copper-colored nigger!" exclaimed Pete, forgetting himself, and giving way to his passion. He spoke in his own tongue, and had entirely forgotten the character he was personating. A moment sufficed to show him how incorrectly he had acted, and now to remedy the evil was planned in an instant. Showing as much surprise as did the rest at his own language, he glanced hurriedly about him.

"Did my brother hear that voice?" he asked, quickly turning toward them.

This cool question—as it appeared to them—caused much surprise, and the hunter again repeated it, before receiving an answer.

“We did, and you spoke,” was the savage retort.

Apparently, before time could be given him for reply, the sound of a voice immediately back of them, and at some distance off, yet perfectly distinct, replied:

“No, it wasn’t that bloody-headed imp that spoke, but me, Single Eye! I’ve been a listening to your talk for some time. You’re a pretty set of varmin’ts to let me sneak up to you without being found out! Jest you come over this way, and I swow if I don’t make you think I’m something else than a coward. You’re nothing but a set of old women. Anybody could whip your hull tribe, easy.”

“Does my brother now know who spoke?” asked the supposed Indian.

The hunter received no answer except a hurried order to remain as guard, while the Indians turned and quickly lost themselves in the darkness. Single Eye remained motionless until the sound of their footsteps died away in the distance, when, uttering a low laugh, he hastened to where Mary and Weetamoo were confined.

“Come, you two, and let’s be making tracks out of this, afore them reds get back from their hunt after Pete Simpson,” he said, as he pulled open the door of their wigwam.

The orders the hunter had given them had been strictly complied with. The two women were in readiness to start without delay. Proceeding with the utmost caution, the hunter led them by a circuitous route, doing so on purpose to avoid the more thickly inhabited part of the village, and also as it led them farther in the gloom caused by the densely wooded side of the mountain. As the escape of their captive was a matter entirely unthought of, Single Eye found but little trouble in passing with few questions, the several red-men he met, and eventually reached the borders of the forest in which he immediately plunged. Proceeding rapidly onward for the distance of a mile, he abruptly stopped and gave utterance to a low signal. A moment sufficed to receive an answer, when, to Mary’s great joy, she found herself once more surrounded by friends.

The meeting between the Mohigan and his wife was characteristic of the Indian nature. No outward manifestations of joy were shown, but the silent pressure of the hand spoke louder than words, and the hearts of both were full to overflowing with the happiness of reunion. But a short time was allowed by the hunter to receive the congratulations of friends, before the order was given for the march to be resumed.

For some time they went on in the darkness, their path leading them through the thickest part of the forest, which caused them to proceed much slower than Simpson would have wished. When they reached the spot where Single Eye had effected his disguise, the silence was broken by a loud yell from the village, in which several voices must have joined, and ended by numerous short, quick cries

The echo had hardly died away, when the confused noise which followed told them that the escape of the prisoners had been discovered, causing each instinctively to quicken their pace.

"Make as much noise as you've a mind to," carelessly exclaimed Pete, "we're too far off for you to do us any hurt."

"Me go back, Sing e Eye!" exclaimed the Mohican.

"What on 'arth you going back for?"

"Get scalp from all warriors who carry off squaw."

"Now look a-here, Assa, you and I's seen some hard times together, and I've saved your life, in many a fight, and I'm willing to do it aguin; but you see I've got to bring this gal safe back to the settlement, and ain't got no time to go back. It's my way of thinking, Assa, that it ain't no good killing an Injin, when there's no call for it, and what on 'arth's to come of the gal, and the rest of them, if I go along with you?"

"Me go 'lone," replied the Indian.

"Wal, you're a headstrong cratter, anyhow, and I might as well try to make water run up hill, as change you, when you've made up your mind to do a thing. I'll tell you what I'll do. If you'll go along till I leave these folks where they won't get lost, I'll come back and help you hunt the varmints."

"No, me go *now*," replied the Indian positively; and without waiting a reply, turned and strode rapidly away, taking the path which led back to the village. A struggle now commenced in the hunter's breast, between inclination and duty. Could he not leave the management of their party to Robert, while he joined Assa! He wavered but for a moment, however, convinced that the young man would be incompetent to the important trust, surrounded, as he would be, with darkness, and perfectly ignorant of the intricate mazes of the dense forest through which their path would lead them. While this rough-spoken, yet tender-hearted man thus determined to act, he could not forget the impulsive nature of the Indian, which he knew would lead him into any and every danger. That he would meet his enemy was certain, and at meeting, he would attack them, and the onset, in all probability would be made without a moment's warning on results. All this the hunter foresaw, but his duty to his charge was too plain to admit of hesitation. Drawing a deep sigh, for he felt that he had seen the Mohican for the last time, he pressed onward until he arrived at the spot where his clothes were hidden. Then, hastily throwing off his disguise, he soon arrayed himself in his own garb, and then rejoined his friends.

"Let's be jogging on, kase I want to get over that stream where L. . . .," he said.

"But where is the Mohican?" asked Robert.

"Gone back to the village," briefly replied the Hunter.

"What is that for?"

"To get killed, I s'pose."

Robert saw at once, by his brief answers, that the Hunter did not

wish to converse the subject which was evidently filling his mind with so much anxiety. Westunoo did not show the least feeling, or manifest any anxiety, although well aware of the dangers attending her husband's course. In fact, it is probable that she would have encouraged, rather than have hindered him. Mary could not believe the Indian woman void of all heart, and, as they had now reached the more open wood, she determined to ascertain how far her nature would allow her to bear up under the supposition that her husband would ever return alive.

"Westunoo, do you know Assiwomset has gone back among your enemies?"

"Yes, we know—come back burn-ly will scalp."

"But, tell me, what would you do if he should be killed?"

She started slightly, but replied almost immediately, and her voice was as calm as ever:

"What do? why, t'ink Mohigan great warrior—go 'lone 'mong enemy—to 'find his scalp, if warrior can take it. Injin squaw no t'ink like white squaw—no do like utter women; no cry, feel proud!"

"But don't you know that it is sinful to kill, when it is not done in self-defence? The Great Spirit we worship tells us so in the Book he has given us for our guide."

"Dat good, p'r'aps, for pale face; no good for Injin! Injin's Great Spirit no teach so; tel Injin kill all he can, where ever he find him. If don't kill en'my, en'my kill him! No help for it, and dat good. Kill ole man—kill young man.—kill squaw—kill all—kill young one, den don't grow up great warrior and kill he. *Dat way* Injin feel, don't wonder feel so, nuller. Pale-face know more dan Injin—he no have a book—to read. Pale-face t'ink one way, Injin nuller—dat good, no t'ink alike."

Mary saw, by the few broken sentences, the drift of her argument, and refrained from making reply. The remainder of the way was passed in silence, until, by the gurgling sound that caught her ear, she was made aware that the stream was reached.

After some time spent in searching for the canoe, which had conveyed her to this spot, it was at last found, when all crossed to the opposite bank. The hunter, trusting some in the strength of his party, and also that they were far in advance of the pursuit, which was sure to be made, allowed his party to rest until daybreak. The time passed quickly, and, as morning broke, they again advanced at a rapid pace. As they reached the summit of some high ground, which gave them an extensive view of the surrounding country, and which the stream they had lately crossed, their attention was attracted by an exclamation from the hunter, followed almost instantly by the faint report of a rifle. Turning their gaze in the direction indicated they observed the figure of an Indian, running with great swiftness toward the stream, on the opposite bank. When he had reached it he plunged into the water, without a moment's hesitation, and swam

rapidly across. He had hardly reached the opposite side, and disappeared in the thick bushes that lined its bank, when there appeared in hot pursuit, a body of between twenty and thirty savages, who, as they arrived upon the banks of the stream, instantly threw themselves in, and were quickly hidden by the bushes.

All this passed before the eyes of our friends, in a few moments. The hunter, turning and coming toward them, exclaimed:

"Now, boys, we've got to do a little fighting, and this here's a little the best place we could find. Lay your guns down, and roll some of these logs together, so we can get these women under shelter, and then see that none of your rifles miss fire, when you pull trigger. That's Asa coming, and the critter's got off, so far, with his scalp all right; but he's bringing a whole nest of them varmints along. That will do," he added, as he saw a sufficient shelter had been prepared. Then turning to Mary and Weetamoo, he said: "You get in under them, and lay still; and you, boy, take half of these men, and keep the red-skins from coming up that side, and I'll take care of this. Lay down flat close by the side of the logs, and don't let them see your noses over the brink, only when you fire. I can't all shoot at once, but one after the other like. Now, get to your places, quick, kase they'll be along soon."

The little band did as they were ordered, and waited in silence the struggle which they were about to make.

It was not long before the Mohican was seen swiftly approaching up the side of the hill; but, from the anxious manner in which he inspected the ground, it was evident that he found much trouble in following the trail, as quickly as his own safety required. To save him the trouble, Single Eye uttered a shout. Asa, raising his head, waved his hand as a signal that he had discovered them, and then bounded forward with increased speed. Ere long he was in their midst. As he reached them, the savage fell exhausted to the ground.

"Wal, you've had a run after breakfast, I guess," remarked the hunter, as a smile of satisfaction passed over his face.

The Mohican had no time for reply. At that moment the report of four rifles, accompanied by as many sharp cries of pain, told that the fight had commenced. The advantage of ground occupied by the whites, balanced very nearly the large number of the savages, but this could have been overcome, if the Indians had been as well versed in the art of war as the whites, for, by a simple flank movement—although to have accomplished it they would be obliged to make a detour—they would have been able to place themselves on as high ground as the party of Single Eye, and then their superior numbers would by a bold dash, quickly have ended the contest. They could not, however, slowly making their way up the hill, keeping their bodies as much concealed as possible behind trees and rocks, but even as the change of position was, the unerring aim of the whites did many of them low, and their numbers were lessening momentally. The very instant that Asa recovered his breath, he joined in the

fray. After a while he and Single Eye, accompanied by three others, disappeared in a direction almost opposite to the position held by their foe. While Robert was wondering what could have been the hunter's intention, he was surprised by hearing a rapid firing on his right, and ere many moments, saw the Indians give ground slowly at first, and then retreat in confusion down the hill, while the forms of the hunter and the Mohigan appeared in sight. The former halted time enough to shout:

"Two on you stay with the women, and the rest take after the rest."

This required no second command, and the pursuit was kept up until but few of the foe remained to return to their village. The Mohigan was fairly loaded down with the bloody trophies of the battle, showing his oath of vengeance had been well kept, for at his belt hung the scalp of every one of the party who had carried off his wife and murdered his brother.

The victory had not been obtained without some loss on the part of the whites. The brave fellow, Harris, was killed, and two others were severely wounded, including Single Eye, who had been shot through the left arm as he was firing his last shot. As their distance from the settlement was great, and would require some days hard traveling to reach, it was decided to bury the body of Harris where he fell, bravely fighting for the safety of the entire party. A litter was soon made, on which the two wounded men were laid, and after dressing their wounds as well as circumstances would permit, they started onward. The hunter, being badly wounded for the first time, was constantly giving utterance to his discontent. Had his words had a realization, not a solitary Indian, except the Mohigan and his wife, would have remained alive.

It may seem strange that the little party were allowed to reach the settlement without further molestation from the Indians; but this was owing to the arrival of the young chieftain who had escaped through the instrumentality of Mary. He reached the village the day following the fight, and from the description given of Mary, he at once recognized her as his savior, and although a large party was on the point of starting, he led them to believe that their duty called them to join King Paup at once, which, under his command, they at once did.

The joy of Dickens, at having his daughter restored to him was unbounded. The return of the party was a gala day, in which each member of that party was a hero. The remains of Harris were brought to the village as soon as it was considered safe to penetrate so far in the wilderness, and interred with due solemnity, within the ground set apart as the village graveyard. Mr. Hendrick's son had found out the way to Mary's heart. On their wearisome journey home he contrived to whisper his hopes and fears to the sweet girl, and to his great joy found that her affections had long been given into his keeping. It was arranged that their union should take place at the same time that Robert and Lucy were made one.

All had again settled to its usual quiet in that simple village. Mr. Hendrick's family had resumed their old home. Single Eye, as soon as his wound permitted, together with Assa had been absent for two weeks, and returned with the cheering intelligence that no Indians were in the neighborhood, but were proceeding with King Philip toward a town called Lancaster, which they intended to attack, though, as it afterward proved, the king was not present during the assault.

"Wal, boy," remarked the hunter, after remaining some days an inmate of Robert's house, "I ain't going to stop here no longer. Gosh, I'd rust for the want of wear. Guess you and Lucy'll make one afore long?"

"If I marry, Single Eye, I hope the wedding will be graced by your company," replied Robert.

"Can't say how much grace I'll be to you; but if I hear's tell on it, you can jest make up your mind Pete Simpson's bound to see it through, and have a rale old up and down dance on the 'casion."

"And depend upon it you will be a welcome guest."

"I know that, boy. You did a good turn for me once, or I shouldn't be here now—and I've done you one, so we're even. I'll drop down this way 'fore long, and then let's have a wedding. What do you say?"

"I will ask the lady to give her consent, and we will try—willingly on my part—to grant your request."

"Wal, do. But that Mohigan's getting in a bad way waiting out there for me, so I'll be off. Good-by."

"Good-by, Simpson, take good care of yourself."

"Try to. Don't forget my powers, boy."

So saying, the hunter, shouldering his rifle, started to overtake his companion.

We now pass over an interval of two months. The woods, as if tired of their summer suit of green, had decked themselves in the more gaudy colors of the autumn tints. The busy ring of the settler's ax filled the air from morning to night, and the teams were constantly coming, heavily laden with the winter's supply of wood. All seemed joyous in that now peaceful settlement. An unusual bustle was manifested by the "women folk." Now and then one could be seen darting with some preparation of food into Walter's bachelor home. But what does it all mean? Simply that Lucy will be here that night to become man and wife; and also that Mary Dickens and John Hendrick are to unite their destinies forever.

It was a glorious wedding. Poor Simpson, instead of being satisfied with one dance, would not remain content unless there was made for him in every set. After the festivities of the evening had broken up, and as Lucy was about to retire, the hunter remarked:

"Gosh, there ain't no harm done, kase it won't be long but a fair up and down swap. The squire lost one daughter and got another; and, by gracious, I don't know, folks, but if some rale fine lady

would say yes, I'd get Mr. Minister to say a few words over us, and then Pete Simpson would be for going right away to keeping house."

We now take a farewell of the characters of our story. The quiet of the village was not again disturbed during the entire of the war.

The reader will bear in mind that he has but read in these pages the "illustrated" truth of history. Perhaps it would have been interesting and profitable that the tale longer should embrace the entire story of the war, until brought to an end by the death of King Philip; but space will not permit. The great chieftain was shot by one of his own nation, at the foot of a little eminence skirting the camp at the foot of Mount Hope. His body was quartered by order of Captain Church, and the head sent to Plymouth, where it was exposed upon a gibbet for twenty years. Let any should condemn the barbarity of this act of our forefathers, they must bear in mind that nearly a century later, when men should have greatly improved in their manners, the heads of the Scotch rebels were exhibited upon Temple Bar, in London.

Single Eye, together with the Mohican, had, after the double marriage, left the settlement, and by their quickness and daring, aided much in defeating the wily Indians. The reader may hear of both again. Weetmoo resided a short distance from the village, and, in after years, her children, together with those of Lucy and Robert, would, in mimic play, act over the siege of the block-house, and the daring exploits of the hunter, SINGLE EYE.

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